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## *Das Kapital* Comes to Russia

*Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli.*

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The triumph of Marxism in backward Russia is commonly regarded as a historical anomaly. Yet, some forty-five years before the Bolshevik Revolution, Marx's *Das Kapital* in Russian translation had already won quick acclaim. Indeed, the book for a brief time enjoyed greater renown in Russia than in any other country, and it won a warm reception—for highly varied reasons—in many political quarters. Although valuable studies have been written on the first responses to Marxism in Russia,<sup>1</sup> little note has been taken of the rapid and widespread success the book scored, and the reasons for this success have received even less attention. An exploration of these reasons will therefore cover a rarely traveled byway of Russian intellectual history.

Few scholars today would deny that *Das Kapital* has had an enormous effect on history in the past hundred years. Nonetheless, when the book was published in Hamburg on September 5, 1867, it made scarcely a stir, except among German revolutionaries. Marx complained that his work was greeted by "a conspiracy of silence" on the part of "a pack of liberals and vulgar economists."<sup>2</sup> However desperately he contrived to provoke established economists to take up *Das Kapital's* challenge to their work, his efforts came to nought. But in October 1868 Marx received good news from an unexpected source. From Nikolai Frantsevich Danielson, a young economist employed by the St. Petersburg Mutual Credit Society, came a letter informing Marx that N. P. Poliakov, a publisher of that city, desired to publish a Russian translation of the first volume of *Das Kapital*; moreover, he also wanted to publish the forthcoming second volume. Danielson, the publisher's represen-

1. For example, see Alexander Gerschenkron, "Economic Development in Russian Intellectual History of the Nineteenth Century," in his *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1965), pp. 152–87; Richard Pipes, "Russian Marxism and Its Populist Background: The Late Nineteenth Century," *Russian Review*, 19, no. 4 (October 1960): 316–37. The standard Soviet works are A. L. Reuel's "*Kapital*" *Karla Marksa v Rossii 1870-kh godov* (Moscow, 1939) and his *Ruskaia ekonomicheskaiia mysl' 60–70-kh godov XIX veka i marksizm* (Moscow, 1956). For the most complete account of Marx and Engels on Russia see Helmut Krause, *Marx und Engels und das zeitgenössische Russland* (Giessen, 1958).

2. Marx to Victor Schily, Nov. 30, 1867, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, 39 vols. (Berlin, 1964–68), 31: 573.

tative, requested that Marx send him the proofs of volume 2 as they came off the press so that Poliakov could publish both volumes simultaneously.<sup>3</sup>

Marx replied immediately. The publication of a Russian edition of volume 1, he wrote, should not be held up, because the completion of volume 2 might be delayed by some six months; and in any case volume 1 represented an independent whole. Danielson proceeded at once to set the project in motion. Nearly four years passed, however, before a Russian translation appeared. Indeed, a year passed before the translation was even begun, and four translators tried their hand at it before Danielson was able to send the manuscript to the printers in late December 1871.<sup>4</sup>

Only one obstacle then stood between the book and the Russian reading public: the censorship. Despite enactment of the Temporary Rules on the Press of 1865 and subsequent regulations that had considerably eased the rigors of censorship, there were doubts that the censors would approve open sale of the book. Between 1865 and 1872 the censors had banned publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Lecky's *History of European Morals*, Spencer's *Social Statics*, and numerous other works that might be adjudged less pernicious than *Das Kapital*.<sup>5</sup>

Under the new laws on the press, *Das Kapital* could have been proscribed on any number of grounds. The Temporary Rules held, for example, that censorship must not permit publication of works that "expound the harmful doctrines of socialism or communism" or works that "rouse enmity and hatred of one class for another." The Board of Censors of Foreign Publications was specifically instructed to prohibit importation of works contrary to the tenets of the Orthodox Church or works that led to atheism, materialism, or disrespect for Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> Nor did the recent fate of the works of Marx and Engels at the hands of the censors offer much hope that *Das Kapital* would pass censorship. As recently as August 11 (23), 1871, the censors of foreign works had decided to ban importation of Engels' *Die Lage der arbeitenden*

3. N. F. Danielson and N. N. Liubavin to Marx, Sept. 18 (30)–Oct. 2, 1868, *K. Marks, F. Engel's i revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* (Moscow, 1967), pp. 158–59. This collection of Marx–Engels correspondence with Russians and their statements on revolutionary Russia is more complete than *Perepiska K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa s russkimi politicheskimi deiateliami* (Moscow, 1947, and 2nd ed., 1951). Hereafter the collection is cited as *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*.

4. Marx to Danielson, Oct. 7, 1868, *Werke*, 32: 563–65. Mikhail Bakunin, owing to his desperate financial straits, accepted a commission to do the translation, but his interest in the work soon flagged, and he quit after completing part of the first chapter. G. A. Lopatin did chapters 2 and 3 and the first part of chapter 4. The remainder of chapter 4 and chapters 5 and 6 were completed by Danielson. The first chapter was probably done by N. N. Liubavin. Iu. M. Rapoport, *Iz istorii sviazei russkikh revoliutsionerov s osnovopolozhnikami nauchnogo sotsializma (K. Marks i G. Lopatin)* (Moscow, 1960), p. 37.

5. "Tsenzurnye vyzskaniia," *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (St. Petersburg), 38: 7.

6. Z. M. Mseriants, *Zakony o pečati*, 4th ed. (Moscow, 1876), pp. 4, 14.

*Klassen in England*, and, according to Lopatin, the censors reprimanded Poliakov for daring to run announcements on book jackets of the forthcoming publication of *Das Kapital*.<sup>7</sup>

By 1872 the censors had prohibited the importation and circulation of all works by Marx and Engels except one—*Das Kapital*. The book, as we shall see, had already won some recognition in Russia shortly after its publication in Germany. Not until 1871, however, did the censors render a judgment on the book, when the Central Committee of Censors of Foreign Publications, on the recommendation of its reader, permitted importation and circulation of the book both in the original language and in translation. The official reader had described the book as “a difficult, inaccessible, strictly scientific work,”<sup>8</sup> implying that it could scarcely pose a danger to the state. It was no doubt this leniency that encouraged Poliakov to go ahead with his plans to publish *Das Kapital*.

As soon as the first copies came off the press, Poliakov sent them to the office of Censors of Domestic Publications. The length and complexity of the book prompted the office to divide the task of scrutinizing it between two readers, D. Skuratov, who read the first half of the book, and A. De-Roberti, who read the last half.

Skuratov dutifully listed objectionable socialist and antireligious passages, taking special note of Marx’s harsh attack on the land reforms General Kiselev had instituted in the Danubian Principalities. But in his report Skuratov dismissed these attacks as harmless, since they were imbedded in a “colossal mass of abstruse, somewhat obscure politico-economic argumentation.” Indeed, he regarded the work as its own best antidote to sedition. “It can be confidently stated,” he wrote, “that in Russia few will read it and even fewer will understand it.” Second, he said, the book could do little harm. Since the book attacked a system rather than individual persons, Skuratov implied that the book would not incite acts threatening the safety of the royal family and government officials. Third, he believed that the argument of the book did not apply to Russia. Marx attacked the unbridled competition practiced in the British factory system, and such attacks, Skuratov asserted, could find no target in Russia because the tsarist regime did not pursue a policy of *laissez faire*. Indeed, at that very moment, Skuratov stated, a special commission had drafted a plan that “as zealously protects the workers’ well-being from abuses on the part of the employers as it protects the employers’ interests against lack of discipline and nonfulfillment of obligations on the part

7. “Tsarskaia tsenzura o proizvedeniiakh F. Engel'sa ‘Polozhenie rabocheho klassa v Anglii,’” *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 1935, no. 4 (71), p. 6. G. A. Lopatin to Marx, Dec. 15, 1870, *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*, p. 185.

8. “Sochineniia Karla Marksa v russkoi tsenzure (Arkhivnaia spravka),” *Dela i dni*, 1920, bk. 1, p. 321.

of the workers." Repeating most of Skuratov's views, De-Roberti also noted that the book contained a good account of the impact of the factory system and the system of unpaid labor time that prevailed in the West. In spite of the obvious socialist tendency of the book, he concluded, a court case could scarcely be made against it, because the censors of foreign works had already agreed to permit importation and circulation of the German edition.<sup>9</sup>

With the last barrier removed, on March 27, 1872, the Russian translation of *Das Kapital* went on sale in the Russian Empire.<sup>10</sup> The publisher, translators, and advocates of the book had persevered in the project for nearly four years until they were finally able to bring the book to the Russian reading public. Why, despite great political and financial risk, had they persisted in the venture?

Poliakov, the publisher, specialized in publishing authors, Russian and foreign, considered dangerous by the authorities. Poliakov also frequently subsidized revolutionaries by commissioning them to do translations for his publishing house.<sup>11</sup> Diffusion of advanced ideas rather than profit was no doubt his primary motive in publishing the book. Poliakov was persuaded to run the risk of publishing *Das Kapital* by members of a circle of revolutionary youth in St. Petersburg, the nucleus of which included N. F. Danielson, G. A. Lopatin, M. F. Negreskul, and N. N. Liubavin, all four of whom took part in the project.<sup>12</sup> Vitally interested in social and economic questions, they read everything of note available on these subjects. In the 1860s they, like other members of the intelligentsia in the capital, avidly read the works of Lassalle, whose advocacy of state subsidization of producers' associations was most congenial to budding Populists. According to Lopatin, when he and his friends found in Lassalle a reference to Marx as "our teacher," they immediately began a study of Marx's *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. They

9. "Karl Marks i tsarskaia tsenzura," *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 1933, no. 1 (56), pp. 6–10. The censors soon gave proof that they had not relaxed their vigilance. The following month they proscribed the *Communist Manifesto*. "Kommunisticheskii Manifest' i tsarskaia tsenzura (Dokumenty)," *Istoriik-Marksist*, 1938, no. 2, p. 106.

10. Danielson to Marx, Mar. 15 (27), 1872, *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*, p. 233.

11. Poliakov's fate illustrates the capriciousness of the censors. Denis Diderot, not Marx, brought about his ruin. Ten months after Poliakov published the Russian translation of *Das Kapital*, the censors burned his latest publication, a collection of Diderot's novels and short stories in Russian translation, and "arrested" books he had in stock worth hundreds of thousands of rubles. I. Knizhnik (Vetrov), "N. P. Poliakov—izdatel' 'Kapitala' Karla Marksa," *Voprosy istorii*, 1947, no. 6, pp. 75–77.

12. They knew each other from their student days at the St. Petersburg Commercial Institute or at the university. All but Liubavin later worked together at the St. Petersburg Mutual Credit Society. N. K. Karataev, "O 'spornykh' voprosakh istorii pervogo russkogo perevoda 'Kapitala' K. Marksa," *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR: Otdelenie ekonomiki i prava*, 1947, no. 4, pp. 254–55.

then turned to *Das Kapital*, and the idea of translating it soon occurred to them.<sup>13</sup>

Although the idea of publishing a translation of *Das Kapital* clearly came from this circle, there is little agreement on which of its members originated the project. Some Soviet scholars suggest that it was Negreskul.<sup>14</sup> Others hold that it was Lopatin.<sup>15</sup> But the credit must go to Danielson. This is a matter of some embarrassment to Soviet historians, who find it unseemly that Danielson, the man most responsible for the appearance of a Russian edition of *Das Kapital*, subsequently used Marxism in his analysis of the Russian economy in a way that bolstered the Populist view that capitalism could not take firm root in Russia.<sup>16</sup>

Yet the truth is that Danielson had read *Das Kapital* shortly after its publication, and the work made so strong an impression on him that he immediately undertook to bring the book to the Russian reading public. He found several publishers who agreed to publish it on condition that he find a proficient translator. Owing to Danielson's initiative, Poliakov first engaged Bakunin and then Lopatin to do the work.<sup>17</sup> Since Danielson also later translated volumes 2 (1886) and 3 (1895) of *Das Kapital*, as well as most of the second Russian edition of volume 1 (1898), and saw all the volumes through the press, his leadership in bringing Marx to the Russian reading public is undeniable.<sup>18</sup>

None of the members of the circle who promoted the publication of a

13. M. Nevedomsky, "G. A. Lopatin o svoikh vstrechakh s Marksom," interview, *Den'*, May 4, 1918, quoted in V. Antonov, *Russkii drug Marksa—German Aleksandrovich Lopatin* (Moscow, 1962), p. 16.

14. Karataev, "O 'spornykh' voprosakh," pp. 256–57. Negreskul, Peter Lavrov's son-in-law, was translating Marx's *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* when he was arrested on December 28, 1869. He died in prison shortly thereafter. Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (New York, 1966), p. 357.

15. Reuel, *Russkaia ekonomicheskaiia mys'*, p. 225. Rapoport, *Iz istorii sviazei russkikh revoliutsionerov*, p. 36.

16. Published under his pseudonym Nikolai-on, "Ocherki nashego poreformennago obshchestvennago khoziaistva," *Slovo*, October 1880, this and subsequent articles were the basis of his book by the same title published in St. Petersburg in 1893.

17. N. F. Danielson, "Zametka k perevodu pisem K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa k Nikolai-onu," *Minuvshie gody*, 1908, no. 1, pp. 38–39.

18. Thanks to Danielson, the first translations of volumes 2 and 3 were again the Russian translations, each being published in St. Petersburg within one year of the German originals. These volumes were eagerly awaited by Danielson, because Marx had said that Russian agriculture would play the same role in the sections on ground rent in these volumes that British industry had played in volume 1. But Engels could find little or nothing on Russian agriculture in Marx's papers that he could include in the posthumous volumes of *Das Kapital*. Engels to Danielson, June 3, 1885, *Werke*, 36: 322; Engels to Danielson, Mar. 5, 1895, *Werke*, 39: 422–33.

Russian edition of volume 1, not even those like Lopatin who were close to Marx and the International Workingmen's League, could be described as "Marxists." Indeed, none of the young men associated with the appearance of this Russian edition of *Das Kapital* ever became a revolutionary Marxist, even though Lopatin, Danielson, and Liubavin lived to see the Bolshevik Revolution. Their world view could be characterized only as Populist. Why then their intense interest in Marx's work?

Russian populism in the late 1860s and early 1870s was more a state of mind than a finished doctrine. The young *intelligenty* were still exploring every possible source of knowledge that might point the way out of Russia's benighted despotism, and they turned to three sources for enlightenment: Russia's own social philosophers, the Russian peasantry, and West European social philosophers. The Russian sources of their world view, however valuable, proved inadequate, especially as regards economics. The *intelligenty* derived a good deal of their economics from Chernyshevsky, but he provided them with no systematic treatise on the Russian economy, and still less on economic and social developments abroad. The young *intelligenty* therefore turned to Western writers—Proudhon, Comte, Mill, Lassalle, and Marx among others. Enamored with science, they eagerly read the works of those West Europeans who claimed to place the study of society on a scientific basis; enamored with socialism, they avidly absorbed the socialist literature of Europe. Fired with a passion for science and socialism, they could not resist the fascination of "scientific socialism." Indeed, the aspect of *Das Kapital* that proved to be of almost universal appeal to Russian readers was the claim, eagerly accepted, that the book was a "scientific" treatise. In this respect, Chernyshevsky's economics, based as it was on his reading of many of the writers who most influenced Marx and designed as it was to develop an un-sentimental, rational, objective view of Russian economic development, led directly to Marx. Moreover, he was probably the only living writer on economics whose work commanded Marx's respect.<sup>19</sup> Another element that drew the *intelligenty* to Marx was the brilliant description he gave in *Das Kapital* of the modern industrial system. Whatever faults the description contained, it was nevertheless the most vivid description then available of what was happening in the factories, workshops, and mines of industrial Britain. It exerted an irresistible attraction on those who wanted an account of the modernization

19. On Marx's high regard for Chernyshevsky, see G. A. Lopatin to N. P. Sinelnikov, Feb. 15, 1873, in A. A. Shilov, ed., *German Aleksandrovich Lopatin (1845–1918)* (Petrograd, 1922), p. 71. Marx was certainly conversant with Chernyshevsky's work, but there is no direct evidence that Chernyshevsky knew Marx's work, despite diligent efforts to establish that he did. See V. M. Korochkin, "Byl li znakom N. C. Chernyshevskii s 'Kapitalom' Marksa?," *Voprosy istorii*, 1968, no. 3, pp. 201–5. Chernyshevsky did, however, evolve "a simple form of historical materialism" (Isaiah Berlin, "Introduction," in Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, p. xxi).

process, especially an account that portrayed the lot of the proletarian in the West as so horrible that the lot of the peasant in Russia might seem idyllic by comparison.

But one should not overlook Marx's own initial explanation of the interest shown his book in Russia. He was not far wrong when he ascribed this interest to the Russian intelligentsia's tendency to seize upon whatever extremist ideas they found in Europe:

It is one of the ironies of fate that the Russians whom I have fought continually for twenty-five years not only in the German language but in the French and English languages too have always been my "well-wishers." In Paris the Russian aristocrats bore me on their shoulders. My writings against Proudhon (1847) [*Poverty of Philosophy*] and the work published by Dunker (1859) [*Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*] have nowhere found a greater sale than in Russia. And the first foreign country to translate *Das Kapital* is Russia. But all of this should not be overestimated. The Russian aristocracy in their salad days were schooled in German universities and at Paris. They always chase after the extremes found in the West. It is utter *gourmandise* such as that in which part of the French aristocracy engaged in the eighteenth century. "This is not for tailors and cobblers," Voltaire once said about his Enlightenment ideas. This does not prevent the Russians from becoming scoundrels the instant they enter state service.<sup>20</sup>

Nor was Marx alone in attributing the popularity of *Das Kapital* in Russia to faddism. After all, Marx was but the latest in the succession of Western economists to win a following in Russia. Deploring the intellectual faddism of the *intelligenty*, the liberal Alexander D. Gradovsky wrote in the late 1870s: "Whoever is astounded by the fact that nobody dares raise a voice against Karl Marx these days without bringing down the wrath of his youthful admirers, let him recall that the older generation defended the honor of Mill just as zealously, and that those still older would suffer no objections to the theory of 'free trade.'" <sup>21</sup>

Whatever doubts Marx entertained concerning the seriousness of the interest Russians displayed in his work, he nonetheless had cause to be pleased by the reception accorded the book in Russia. Danielson reported that the Russian censors, who believed that few Russians would read *Das Kapital*, had miscalculated. Within six weeks of the publication date, nine hundred

20. Marx to L. Kugelmann, Oct. 12, 1868, *Werke*, 32: 566–67. Surprised, however, by the extraordinary popularity the book won in Russia—"where *Das Kapital* is read and valued more than anywhere"—and by the valor displayed by the terrorists of *Narodnaia Volia*, Marx subsequently took a far more favorable view of his Russian "well-wishers." Marx to F. A. Sorge, Nov. 5, 1880, *Werke*, 34: 477.

21. Alexander D. Gradovsky, "Sotsializm na Zapade Evropy i v Rossii," in his *Trudnye gody (1876–1880): Ocherki i opyty* (St. Petersburg, 1880), p. 228.

copies of the edition of three thousand copies had already been sold. He said that many newspapers and journals had reviewed the book, though none had yet reviewed it in great detail, and all so far had praised it.<sup>22</sup> Even before Danielson wrote to Marx about a Russian translation, *Das Kapital* in German garb had already found receptive readers in Russia. For example, Joseph Dietzgen, a German-born workman-philosopher who worked in a St. Petersburg tannery from 1863 to 1869, wrote to Marx to tell of the “rapture” he experienced on studying *Das Kapital* and to express his appreciation for the services Marx had rendered to science as well as to the working class.<sup>23</sup>

The first critic of *Das Kapital* in Russia was the nobleman Evgenii De-Roberti, a Comtean, a future zemstvo activist, and a pioneer of academic sociology in Russia. Paying peculiar tribute to Marx, De-Roberti wrote in 1869, “Marx belongs to the school of so-called moderate sociologists that shuns everything utopian and struggles against official political economy by employing the latter’s own weapons. To this school belongs the honor of rebuilding socialism on new foundations.” Despite the vast store of empirical data the book contained, Marx’s dialectical method was metaphysical not positivist. This fact, De-Roberti wrote, made Marx “a worthy pupil of Proudhon,” although Marx’s dialectic was more subtle, intricate, and prolix than Proudhon’s. De-Roberti raised two objections to the work that would become familiar in subsequent refutations of the book: first, that the labor theory of value, as expounded by Marx, contained nothing new; second, that Marx’s theories were not abstracted from empirical data. The data were selected to fit the theories and were then expounded dialectically. This method, wrote De-Roberti, “is very alluring, because it enables one to write a whole book without ever emerging from his study and without having recourse to constant verification of his theories by actual facts.”<sup>24</sup>

De-Roberti’s adverse criticism notwithstanding, *Das Kapital* won Marx a considerable reputation in Russia as a “scientist,” and for many Russians

22. Danielson to Marx, May 23 (June 4), 1872, *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*, p. 244. While the German edition came out in 1867 in one thousand copies (some of which found their way to Russia) and did not go into a second edition until 1872, the Russian edition came out in three thousand copies and was, according to Marx, almost sold out within a year. Marx, *Capital*, English ed. (Moscow, n.d.), 1: 16. A British historian of socialism pointed out in 1883 that *Das Kapital* had already been translated into Russian and was widely read in Russia, while scant notice was paid the work in Britain. John Rae, *Contemporary Socialism* (New York, 1884), p. 105. The first English translation came out in 1887.

23. Joseph Dietzgen to Marx, Oct. 24, 1867, *Werke*, 31: 674.

24. Evgenii De-Roberti, *Politiko-ekonomicheskie etudy* (St. Petersburg, 1869), pp. 58–60. Four months earlier, in a review published in Paris, De-Roberti had described Marx as a moderate socialist because Marx accepted the necessity of capitalism instead of railing against it as the utopians had done. *La Philosophie positive*, 3 (July–December 1868): 508.



*Das Kapital* became the handbook on West European capitalism. Passages from the book began to crop up in the journals as Populist writers cited Marx in order to expose the plight of the hapless European proletariat or to gain insight into Russia's economic destiny.

For example, in April 1869 Grigorii Z. Eliseev, a prominent Narodnik publicist, in an attack on Malthusianism, called Marx "the most gifted and honest of the contemporary political economists, renowned for his work *Das Kapital*." Not overpopulation, Eliseev contended, but serfdom enforced by the state caused mass misery. If we want to know what happened in Russia under serfdom, he wrote, we need only paraphrase *Das Kapital* on slavery in America: "We shall only read serf market instead of slave market, serf estates instead of Kentucky and Virginia, the free population of Russia instead of Africa." Supported by the tsarist state, the gentry maltreated the Russian peasant as the first capitalists had the Negro slave. And the unbridled lust for profit drove the master both in the Americas and old Russia.<sup>25</sup>

At this embryonic stage of Marxism in Russia, Eliseev's effort to relate Marx to Russia's social development was a rare exception. Most of the writers who cited *Das Kapital* did so to expose the miserable plight of the proletarianized peasant in the West in order to help save the peasant in Russia from a similar plight,<sup>26</sup> or, failing this, at least to ameliorate the plight of the proletarian in Russia through Factory Laws.<sup>27</sup>

But there was another attempt before 1872 to apply Marxism to Russian conditions. In January 1871, for the first time, as far as we know, a Russian revolutionary asked Marx to discuss his views respecting the durability of the

25. G. Eliseev, "Otvét na kritiku," *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 1869, no. 4, pp. 347, 350-54. Marx, *Capital*, 1:267.

26. A. Mikhailov, "Proizvoditel'nye assotsiatsii," *Delo*, 1870, no. 4, pp. 219-39, and 1870, no. 6, pp. 1-31. N. Ia. Iakobi, "O položenii rabochikh v Zapadnoi Evrope s obshchestvenno-gigienicheskoi tochki zreniia," *Arkhiv sudebnoi meditsiny i obshchestvennoi gigieny*, 1870, bk. 3, pp. 160-216. Although this article did not refer to conditions in Russia, the censors ordered that the entire article be excised. The editor was discharged for publicizing "extreme socialist ideas." A. I. Pashkov, ed., *Istoriia russkoi ekonomicheskoi mysli*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1955-), 2, pt. 2, pp. 20-21.

27. V. P. [Pokrovsky], "Chto takoe rabochii den'?" (Po Marksú, *Das Kapital*, Hamburg, 1867)," *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 1860, no. 4, pp. 407-34.

The first study of *Das Kapital* in Russia was N. I. Ziber's University of Kiev dissertation, *Teoriia tsennosti i kapitala Rikardo s nekotorymi iz pozdneishikh dopolnenii i raziasnenii*, published in installments (*Kievskie Universitetskie Izvestiia*, 1871), and published as a book in the same year. Treating Marx's theories of value, of money, and of capital, the book made little impact on the intelligentsia until the late 1870s. Since copies of *Das Kapital* were in short supply, Ziber's exposition of Marx's economic theories became instrumental in popularizing the book with the Russian reading public. Ziber brought out a second edition of his dissertation in 1885, *David Rikardo i Karl Marks v ikh obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskikh issledovaniakh* (St. Petersburg), which added considerably more material on Marx, especially the articles on Marx that Ziber wrote in the 1870s (see note 42).

*obshchina* and the viability of Russia's noncapitalist path of development. This request came in a letter to Marx from E. L. Tomanovskaia, who was the representative of the Russian section of the International based in Geneva to the General Council of the International in London, shortly before she joined the Paris Commune. Unlike many of the Russians who beseeched Marx until his death in 1883 to publicize his views on the future of Russia's economy, she was pessimistic about the durability of Russia's communal institutions and tried to convince Marx that they were doomed. As for communal land ownership in Russia, she wrote to Marx, "unfortunately the disintegration and transformation of the [peasant commune] into private small holdings is more than likely," because this transformation was, in her view, the purpose of the government's fiscal policy.<sup>28</sup>

When the Russian edition of *Das Kapital* finally appeared in the following year, the reception it received certainly justified Danielson's belief that the book was in great demand. Three points were frequently made in the reviews. Most of the reviewers found Marx's description of the horrors that capitalism inflicted on the proletariat in the West of the greatest interest. By publicizing this description, the reviewers hoped to warn their compatriots of the fate that awaited Russia should the *intelligenty* fail to keep Russia on a noncapitalist path. Pointing to the misery of the industrial and agricultural proletariat in Britain, these reviewers in effect said, "There but for the grace of God goes Russia." A second group, mainly academics, concerned themselves with Marx's method. A third group, however, manifested a new interest, a concern with Marx's "laws" and stages of economic development as they applied to Russia.

Virtually all of the reviewers and commentators acknowledged that Marx was a great authority, perhaps the greatest authority, on economics. But then each reader fastened on to that aspect of Marx's work which seemed to support the reader's a priori assumptions. Revolutionary and conservative, Populist and future Social Democrat, capitalist and worker, almost all invoked Marx's authority to further their respective cause. The exceptions to the well-nigh universal acclaim initially given *Das Kapital* in Russia were the anarchists, Bakunin and later Kropotkin, and a few of the most conservative academic economists.

All but one of the newspaper reviews that appeared in the spring of 1872 were favorable. The hostile review appeared in the conservative *Syn otechestva*, but it was not written by a Russian. The editor simply reprinted a Russian translation of two lectures on contemporary socialism and communism delivered by the well-known German historian Professor Heinrich von Sybel to a meeting of German industrialists in Berlin. Claiming that Marx's doc-

28. E. L. Tomanovskaia (Dmitrieva) to Marx, Jan. 7, 1871, *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*, p. 186.

trines had no bearing on Russia, the editor nevertheless believed that Russian readers were sufficiently interested in the social movement animated by these doctrines in Western Europe to warrant the newspaper's presenting a critique of *Das Kapital* by a "first-class" European scholar.<sup>29</sup> Sybel did not deny the consistency of Marx's argument, but maintained that the entire elaborate structure collapsed because it was based on the false premise that labor is the source of all value.<sup>30</sup>

All other reviewers however took a far more favorable view of the book. The semiofficial organ, the *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*, which carried the first newspaper review of the Russian translation of *Das Kapital*, reported that the book was doubtless one of the magisterial works of modern economic literature. The "thinking minority of the reading public" would find in Marx's work "instructive lessons not only of a purely scientific character but also of a social character" even if the reader did not agree with the author's philosophy. The anonymous reviewer "V. P." was particularly impressed by the way the organization of the book enhanced the intrinsic value of the data. And, quite surprisingly, the writer described Marx's style as distinguished by "clarity, intelligibility, and, in spite of the scientific intricacy of the subject, extraordinary vividness," unlike the style of "the majority of German scholars who write their works in language so dry and obscure that it splits the heads of ordinary mortals."<sup>31</sup>

The next review appeared in the moderately liberal *Novoe vremia*, and it took the form of an editorial. The editors noted, "Now when the economic life of our Fatherland is being re-examined, the significance of this work is especially great not only for students of economic literature but also for every educated Russian." The editors then proceeded to interpret the book as an anti-Western, antibourgeois, anticapitalist Populist tract.

The editorial applauded Marx's contention that bourgeois political economy had degenerated to mere apology, because this contention served as a warning to those Russians who uncritically worshiped everything Western. Previous exposés of the ruthless pauperization of the masses in Europe could not boast of the incontrovertible proofs that Marx had amassed: "If one adds to this the impartiality and equanimity with which the author of *Das Kapital* carried out all of his many-sided investigations of the social 'ulcer' [pauperization], which is still unchecked and is only exacerbated by palliatives, one may

29. *Syn otechestva*, Apr. 28, 1872, quoted in Reuel, *Russkaia ekonomicheskaiia mysl'*, p. 242.

30. *Syn otechestva*, Apr. 28, and Apr. 29, 1872, quoted in O. Markova, "Otkliki na 'Kapital' v Rossii 1870-kh godov: Bibliografiia," *Letopisi Marksizma*, 1930, no. 1, p. 125.

31. *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*, Apr. 8 (20), 1872. To rebut criticisms of his style, Marx cited this review in the afterword of the second German edition of the book. See *Capital*, p. 16.

without exaggeration consider Marx as the first scholar to give a strictly scientific basis" to the struggle against capitalism. Sensing that they were no match for Marx, none of the bourgeois economists had as yet come forward with a serious critique of Marx's book or dared to deny this argument.

The source of all social evil, the editorial concluded, was the privileges enjoyed by the nonproductive sector of society, a malignant growth on the organism of the national economy. "These privileges subject the toilers, the only productive class, to the power of the other, the unproductive sector, and they give rise to a new type of serfdom, superficially less degrading than the former it is true, but incomparably graver in its consequences. . . ."<sup>32</sup>

Considering the source, the next newspaper review to appear was most curious. The anonymous reviewer of the liberal *Birzhevye vedomosti* promised to present without comment or criticism a concise résumé of the book. He succeeded admirably, but his conclusions were odd to say the least:

Marx taking England as his example holds that in order to be free labor, and not labor under the oppression of exploiters, the working class demands the strong hand of a law that would defend it. According to the author, in legislation in place of the fervent rubric of "the inalienable rights of man" it would be far more honorable to give place to the rubric of a statutory limit on the workday that would make clear when the time sold by the worker ends and when the time belonging to himself begins.<sup>33</sup>

It is plain to see why the reviewer might overlook or remain silent on the revolutionary implications of the book. But why should such a newspaper have advocated that Russia adopt laws similar to the British Factory Acts? We may conjecture that the reviewer, like most members of the intelligentsia, was racked by guilt stemming from an ethic that placed the intelligentsia, who did not produce material values, in debt to the "toilers," who did. But this does not explain why support of such laws was, in fact, common among the industrialists of St. Petersburg and their spokesmen, unlike the industrialists of Moscow, for example, who opposed such action. Why did the St. Petersburg industrialists take this unique position? According to Tugan-Baranovsky, wages were higher in St. Petersburg, where industrialists drew labor from a sparsely populated countryside, than they were in Moscow and the central industrial region generally, where industrialists drew labor from a densely

32. Editorial, *Novoe vremia*, Apr. 23 (May 5), 1872, quoted in Reuel, *Russkaia ekonomicheskaiia mys'l'*, pp. 238–40. The censors warned I. Sukhomlin, the editor, against repeating such seditious views. He denied any seditious intent in the editorial, "the main idea of which is not the idea of socialism, but the idea of limiting the privileges and the abuses of capital with respect to the toiling classes." Quoted in *Ocherki istorii ideinoi bor'by vokrug "Kapitala" K. Marksa* (Moscow, 1968), pp. 115–16. Marx thought the editorial was quite laudatory. Marx to Sorge, May 23, 1872, *Werke*, 33: 469.

33. *Birzhevye vedomosti*, May 30 (June 11), 1872.

populated countryside and virtually around the clock sweated hordes of impoverished peasants turned factory-hand. St. Petersburg industrialists, therefore, supported labor laws that would tend to raise wages elsewhere in the empire to the level that prevailed in the capital.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever the case, *Das Kapital* in Russia did spur on a discussion of the need for laws to limit the workday and regulate child labor. And this was in a Russia where many of the intelligentsia stoutly denied the possibility and desirability of capitalist development. Nevertheless, the struggle to enact laws protecting labor was joined by the early 1870s, and proponents of such laws cited Marx's work to bolster their case.

Russia's manufacturers and their spokesmen were now extolling ever more glowingly the benefits of industrialization and asserting the need for state action to promote, not hinder, it. Whatever the wishes of the Populists, they argued, industrialization could not be resisted, because "Industry is like love: drive it out the door and it comes flying in through the window." This challenge to the anticapitalist credo of the socialist *intelligenty* was taken up by Nikolai Konstantinovich Mikhailovsky, one of their current idols, the occasion for his rejoinder being the publication in 1872 of the proceedings of the first All-Russian Congress of Manufacturers, Industrialists, and Friends of Native Industry. At the congress, which took place in 1870, a speaker had urged that in order to conserve Russia's forests the state should require that railroad locomotives burn coal instead of firewood. But in the name of *laissez faire* he then denounced proposals that the state ban child labor. Such a ban, he reasoned, would violate freedom of contract and work a financial hardship on the poor; moreover, by impairing the growth of industry, which made the factory worker more cultured than the peasant, the ban would also retard the enlightenment of the people. The state should therefore leave industry free to employ child labor, thereby enabling native industry to compete with foreign industry and in this way promoting industrialization.<sup>35</sup>

In his review of the proceedings, Mikhailovsky breathed open contempt for those who pleaded for freedom to exploit child labor. Against such pleas, he cited the passages in *Das Kapital* that depicted the horrors of child labor in Britain. If industrialization meant subjecting Russian children to that fate and separating the toilers from the *obshchina* and the *artel* in which the toilers jointly owned the means of production, Russia should and could avoid it. Even

34. M. I. Tugan-Baranovsky, *Russkaia fabrika v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, 7th ed. (Moscow, 1938), pp. 325–26.

35. N. Mikhailovsky, "Literaturnye i zhurnal'nye zametki," *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 203, pt. 2 (August 1872): 366. A majority of the congress, most of the delegates being professional men or civil servants, not industrialists, favored legislation to protect labor. Tugan-Baranovsky, *Russkaia fabrika*, p. 322.

assuming that industrialization was inevitable in Russia, he argued, it need not take the form it had taken in Britain. If the special pleaders, who urged that the tsarist state foster industrialization by subsidizing private entrepreneurs, would instead urge that the state foster industrialization by subsidizing the *obshchina* and the *artel*, Russia could industrialize and yet avoid proletarianization of the peasantry. Therefore, in Mikhailovsky's view: "The labor question in Europe is a revolutionary question because there it requires the transfer of the conditions of toil into the hands of the workers. The labor question in Russia is a conservative question because there only the preservation of the conditions of toil in the hands of the workers is required, a guarantee to the present holders of property."<sup>36</sup>

Thus *Das Kapital* arrived in Russia just at the moment that the Russian economy was recovering from the slump that followed Emancipation and was beginning to assume capitalist characteristics. Industrialization raised in the minds of the intelligentsia the question of their country's economic destiny. And it was precisely this concern that drew Mikhailovsky and many of the *intelligenty* to *Das Kapital*. Did Marx show that all countries had to follow England's path through the "primary accumulation of capital" in order to industrialize? This question was touched upon in two reviews that appeared in "thick" journals, one by Mikhailovsky and the other by Illarion I. Kaufmann.

Mikhailovsky adopted *Das Kapital* as a manual on "how not to industrialize." For him, it was above all a warning to economically backward countries such as Russia against what awaited them if they did not take appropriate preventive measures. In his review of the book Mikhailovsky asserted that the Russian translation could not be more timely, for "civilization"—a soulless, dehumanizing, industrial society that substituted materialist determinism for ethical choice—was spreading in Russia. One might resist industrialization, but the fact remained that the day of its triumph was rapidly approaching, thereby increasing the possibility that in Russia it would take the undesirable forms it had assumed in Europe. Since industrialization was inevitable, the crucial question was whether it would take the form of capitalism, as in the West, before it could pass into socialism or whether it could immediately bypass the capitalist stage of development and take a unique Russian form of socialism. In other words,

Must we await the dissolution of the *obshchina* in order to say that it should be preserved, the transfer of all state lands and factories into private hands concentrating small holders' property in private hands in order to say that the interests of the Russian factory owners are in essence not the interests of the Russian people, . . . the development of

36. Mikhailovsky, "Literaturnye i zhurnal'nye zametki," pp. 378, 395–98.

agricultural day laborers in order to say that freedom to die of hunger is not freedom?<sup>37</sup>

Russia had to choose, and soon. Capitalist industrialization or “popular production” were the alternatives. Mikhailovsky then turned to *Das Kapital* to see what the founder of “scientific socialism” wrote about the question.

A reading of the relevant passages today and of Marx’s explication indicates that Marx believed that capitalism as it developed in Britain was re-shaping Western Europe in its own image. Marx wrote that he had used British capitalism as his model in *Das Kapital* only because capitalism there had manifested itself in the most clearcut form. As for the German reader, Marx warned, if he “shrugs his shoulders at the condition of the English industrial and agricultural laborer, or in the optimistic fashion comforts himself with the thought that in Germany things are not nearly so bad, I must plainly tell him, ‘*de te fabula narratur.*’” In short, Marx believed that economically backward Germany was bound to go the way of industrial Britain.<sup>38</sup>

Herein lay the timeliness of Marx’s book, according to Mikhailovsky—who then interpreted this passage in its opposite sense. In his view, Marx did not argue that recapitulation of the British prototype of industrialization was inevitable elsewhere; on the contrary, Marx’s account of this prototype served to warn the Germans of the horrible fate that awaited them if they failed to choose a different path of industrialization. In support of his interpretation Mikhailovsky quoted from the book’s preface:

One nation can and should learn from others. And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and alleviate the birth pangs.<sup>39</sup>

Misconstruing this statement, Mikhailovsky concluded that Russia could “learn from others” how to avoid *capitalist* industrialization. The warning against capitalism that Marx had issued to his German compatriots in his exposé of the British industrial system should likewise help Russians save their country from Britain’s unenviable fate. Fortunately, in Russia, Mikhailovsky wrote, capitalist tendencies were still weak. Nevertheless, they were sufficiently strong, he warned, “to make it necessary for us to ponder their

37. N. Mikhailovsky, “Po povodu russkogo izdaniia kniga Karla Marksa,” *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 1872, no. 4, pp. 176, 183.

38. K. Marx, *Kapital: Kritika politicheskoi ekonomii*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1872), p. xi. *Capital*, pp. 8–9. Marx subsequently denied that the process of “the primary accumulation of capital” that he described in Western Europe was inevitable in Russia or elsewhere. Marx to the editor of *Otechestvennye zapiski*, n.d., probably late 1877, in P. W. Blackstock and B. F. Hoselitz, eds., *The Russian Menace to Europe* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), pp. 216–18.

39. Mikhailovsky, “Po povodu,” pp. 183–84; *Kapital*, p. xii.

further development. That is why we say that Marx's book could not be more apropos."<sup>40</sup>

Thanks to Marx, Russia had been warned of the dangers of capitalist industrialization that lay ahead, Mikhailovsky wrote, and Russians should now think of developing an alternative form of industrialization. Raising the question of whether *Das Kapital* allowed the possibility that a backward country could avoid the capitalist stage of development, Mikhailovsky gave a strong affirmative. In short, he attempted to give populism a Marxist underpinning.

Another approach to this question was taken by Kaufmann, a liberal economist and professor at St. Petersburg University, in what turned out to be one of Marx's favorite reviews of *Das Kapital*. The point that most distinguishes Kaufmann from other Russian reviewers is that for him *Das Kapital* was not simply a diatribe against the evils of the factory system and an appeal for laws to limit child labor and regulate the length of the workday. It was not the work merely of an economist, a historian, a philosopher, or a sociologist. *Das Kapital* represented for him a comprehensive scientific investigation of the basic laws governing the transformation of one social formation into another. In this Kaufmann was the Russian writer who came the closest in the 1870s to grasping Marx's materialist interpretation of history.

But Kaufmann did not explicitly attempt to apply Marxism to Russia. He devoted some space to an exposition of Marx's economic theories, but focused mainly on Marx's general theory of social and economic change. For example, in his review he quoted Marx's famous statement from the preface to *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* on the relation between base and superstructure. Then, for the first time, a Russian seized upon an element in Marx that would prove of paramount interest to Russian thinkers for the next fifty years and into the Soviet period, Marx's views on the stages of social development:

The social organization represented by Asiatic despotism, that which can be observed in the classical peoples, the organization that represented feudal society, and that which represents contemporary capitalist society—all of them are so different from each other that the laws adduced from the features common to all of them would not enable us to explain their most interesting aspects.<sup>41</sup>

40. Mikhailovsky, "Po povodu," p. 184. Mikhailovsky's misreading of Marx became a stock argument used by Populists to deny the possibility of capitalism developing in Russia. For example, see Plekhanov in his Populist phase: G. V. Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, 24 vols. (Moscow and Leningrad, 1923–27), 1: 57–58. See also Richard Kindersley, *The First Russian Revisionists: A Study of "Legal Marxism" in Russia* (London and New York, 1962), pp. 20, 238–39.

41. I. [Kaufmann], "Tochka zreniia politiko-ekonomicheskoi kritiki u Karla Marksa," *Vestnik Evropy*, May 1872, pp. 427–29.



Kaufmann, however, neither stated that the four social formations listed in the preface to *Zur Kritik* constituted successive stages of social development nor explicitly identified Russia with one of them. But while denying that Marx posited historical laws operating everywhere in space and time, Kaufmann seemed to suggest that the laws Marx adduced from the genesis and development of capitalism in Western Europe were operating also in Russia. In brief, his review of the Russian translation of *Das Kapital* implied that Russia could not avoid capitalism.

The reviews by Mikhailovsky and Kaufmann injected a new element, Marxism, into the discussion of Russia's economic destiny. But the initial interest that the appearance of *Das Kapital* generated in Marx's views on the question ended for the moment with these two reviews. Except for the somewhat academic articles written by the economist Nikolai Ivanovich Ziber,<sup>42</sup> little discussion of *Das Kapital* and even less on Marxist views of Russia's economic destiny found its way into the censored press in Russia for about five years. To the young revolutionaries who now plunged into the "going-to-the-people" movement and faced the peasant in his village, the system described in *Das Kapital* doubtless seemed light-years away. But in 1877 interest in the book revived as gradually more and more of the intelligentsia were assailed by doubts about their optimistic assessment of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, the durability of the *obshchina* and the *artel*, and Russia's immunity to capitalism. From 1877 on, the relevance of *Das Kapital* to Russia's economic development was hotly debated,<sup>43</sup> and Russian revolutionaries anxiously importuned Marx to state his views on the question.

Interest in Marx was also renewed on the other side of the ideological barricades. The moderate liberal Konstantin D. Kavelin exhorted young revolutionaries to shun revolutionary action, because Marx taught that reform is the only way to progress. Marx himself, Kavelin argued, pointed this out in the preface to *Das Kapital* when he wrote, "The point of view on which I stand considers the development of economic-social formations as a natural-historical process." Kavelin observed that "these words would suffice for people who know how to read, but everywhere they are rare. Marx did not simply say historical process, but deemed it necessary to add 'natural-historical,' that is, one in which transitions from one formation to another are not made forcibly but occur automatically." Genuine socialists heeding Marx, he declared, should abandon the socialism of the pistol and the bomb for the

42. N. [Ziber], "Ekonomicheskaiia teoriia Marksa," *Znanie*, 1874, no. 1, pp. 43-90; 1876, no. 10, pp. 1-52; 1876, no. 12, pp. 1-49; 1877, no. 2, pp. 1-47; 1877, no. 4, pp. 1-50; *Slovo*, 1878, no. 1, pp. 174-204. Also see I. Ziber, *Izbrannye ekonomicheskie proizvedeniia*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1959), 1: 555-85, 683-722.

43. See Reuel, *Rusaskaia ekonomicheskaiia mys'*, pp. 252-86.

evolutionary, nonviolent socialism expounded in *Das Kapital*.<sup>44</sup> And the outright reactionary Dmitrii Tolstoy used Marxism as a bogey, warning that political reforms would open the floodgates to communism: "Every attempt to introduce West European parliamentary forms of government into Russia is doomed to failure. If the tsarist regime is overthrown, its place will be taken by pure undisguised communism, the communism of Mr. Karl Marx who has just died in London and whose theories I have studied with attention and interest."<sup>45</sup>

Until the conversion of G. V. Plekhanov and his comrades P. B. Akselrod and Vera Zasulich to revolutionary Marxism some ten years after the publication of *Das Kapital* in Russia, most Russian readers, irrespective of their political persuasion, failed to grasp the revolutionary implications of the book for their country. Only with difficulty and some anguish did Plekhanov and his comrades perceive the supposedly inexorable laws discovered by Marx and come to regard them as applicable to Russia, laws that purportedly operated independently of the human will yet impelled the bourgeoisie under feudalism and the proletariat under capitalism to function as the revolutionary agents of history. The difficulty Russians experienced in applying the theories of *Das Kapital* to their country is, however, understandable; Marx himself found it a difficult problem. Nonetheless, it may be useful to examine the reasons for this inability or unwillingness on the part of Russians to grasp Marx's key doctrine and to apply it to Russia.

The resistance to this key doctrine of Marxism stemmed mainly from the world view of most of the revolutionary intelligentsia, based as it was on a voluntarist theory and practice of social change. Man, in their view, was the subject of history. The young revolutionaries were therefore quite willing to accept Marx's "scientific" explanation of the exploitation of the proletariat; this explanation gave a scientific cachet to Populist ethical ideals. The revolutionaries readily grasped those aspects of Marxism that emphasized the capacity of human will and action to shape economic developments; hence their interest in Marx's account of the struggle for the Factory Acts in Britain. Or like the liberal Populist Mikhailovsky, they used *Das Kapital* to buttress their belief that Russia was taking and could continue to take a noncapitalist path of development. But they could not begin to understand or accept Marxist determinism until populism manifestly failed to attain its goals and Russian industrialization reached the point where its rapid growth could no longer be ascribed merely to the malevolence of speculators, kulaks, and the state. Meanwhile, the Populists got their economics from Marx (and

44. K. D. Kavelin, "Razgovor (1880)," *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1897), vol. 2, cols. 1001–2.

45. Conversation cited in Bernhard von Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, ed. Franz von Stockhammern, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1930–31), 4: 573.

Chernyshevsky), but derived their world view from Russia's "subjective" school of social philosophers.

Nor did the readers who from the outset saw only determinism in *Das Kapital* draw revolutionary conclusions from it. Quite the contrary. Those who interpreted *Das Kapital* as teaching that man is the object of history found their own particular uses for the book. The tsarist state, as indicated by the views of the censors, found the Marxist variety of revolutionary socialism far less dangerous than the indigenous variety, which resorted to individual terror; consequently, the censors never imposed a total ban on *Das Kapital*. As for the liberals, Kavelin used the book as an argument against any kind of revolutionary action. And if the historical laws disclosed by Marx were inevitably generating capitalism in Russia, certain students of Marx welcomed this as a happy development. Kaufmann, gladly accepting the inevitable, prompted Marx to claim in 1879 that Kaufmann had "turned into a kind of 'Pindar' of modern stockjobbery"; and Ziber grimly concluded that "we shall have no sense in this country until the muzhik is cooked up in the factory boiler."<sup>46</sup>

Not until 1882 did a Russian reader see a revolutionary connection between *Das Kapital* and developments in Russia. In that year Plekhanov announced his readiness to make of *Das Kapital* a "Procrustean bed" for his Populist comrades,<sup>47</sup> because Russia had irrevocably taken the capitalist path of development. The question of the day, therefore, was no longer "how could Russia avoid capitalism and pass directly to socialism" but how to shorten and lessen the birth pangs of the transition to capitalism and then to socialism.<sup>48</sup> Whether Plekhanov, or Dmitrii Tolstoy, or Mikhailovsky, was, owing to his reading of *Das Kapital*, the more perceptive prophet of Russia's economic and political future could be the subject of a long debate. In any event, as the epigraph at the head of this article puts it, "The fate of books depends on the capacity of their reader." A more apt description of the fate of *Das Kapital* in Russia could not be devised.

46. Marx to Danielson, Apr. 10, 1879, *Werke*, 34: 375. N. Mikhailovsky, *Literaturnye vospominaniia i sovremennaia smuta* (St. Petersburg, 1900), 1: 339, quoted in Kindersley, *First Russian Revisionists*, p. 9.

47. Plekhanov to P. L. Lavrov, n.d., probably spring 1882, *Dela i dni*, 1921, bk. 2, p. 91.

48. Plekhanov, "Nashi raznoglasii," *Sochineniia*, 2: 337-38.