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The First International and the Russian *Obshchina*

Russian revolutionists in the 1870s had a long history of opposition to build on—from the massive Pugachev peasant rebellion during the reign of Catherine the Great to an aristocratic conspiracy (Decembrist Revolt) at the end of the reign of Alexander II. They also drew on a rich indigenous fund of social criticism and programs, the latest and most important of which were the writings of Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev, the proclamations of the Land and Liberty group, and the radical economic articles of Chernyshevsky. But the growth of the West European socialist movement abroad, particularly in the years of the International Workingmen's Association (First International), lent a new urgency and direction to native radicalism and contributed measurably to ideologies and programs in the first decade of widely organized activism, the "springtime" of Russian revolutionary socialism. On the whole, European socialist parties were concerned more with the urban worker than with the peasant, but besides establishing the basic doctrines of workers' socialism, the International roughed out a socialist agrarian doctrine. This doctrine provided revolutionists in rural Russia with an opportunity to proceed some distance beyond the nationalistic "Russian Socialism" of Herzen and free themselves significantly from an older nativist tradition which both idealized the natural communal instincts of the peasant and his *obshchina* (rural commune) and denigrated Western radicalism in the name of a special destiny for Russia.

Everywhere in Europe, west as well as east, socialist doctrines were tailored to national needs. The creative legacy of Russian radicals in the 1870s was their pioneering formulation of revolutionary socialist programs and tactics in an almost totally rural environment. Their formulations unquestionably built on the rich Russian oppositional past. But for the most part they looked forward toward a European socialist future rather than backward toward some atavistic agrarian communal model. Attentive to the deliberations of the International and its several member parties, Russian revolutionists in the so-called populist decade were intent mainly on applying Western socialism, as they understood it, to Russia. They generally placed their agrarian communal ideology, even that quintessentially "narodnik" vision of revolutionary socialist obshchinas, in an international setting.

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Each of the three congresses of the First International held between 1867 and 1869 discussed the question of communal property in land. No question was of greater concern or received more attention in international socialist circles during these years. The question was first raised at the Lausanne Congress in 1867. The Brussels Congress in 1868 passed a resolution calling for the communalization of the soil and forests, as well as mines, collieries, railroads, canals, roads, and telegraph lines. The congress concluded that *propriété collective*, including agricultural property, was *une nécessité sociale*.[1] At the Basel Congress the next year the question was again slated for consideration. Basel was the most representative of all the congresses of the First International. The German Social Democratic Workers Party of August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht participated, and Mikhail Bakunin made his first appearance at an International congress. The Russian anarchist enjoyed a considerable reputation in European radical circles but was yet to have any impact in his native land. Socialists from all major European states were in attendance for the debate on landed property, an issue which grew in importance as the struggle between "collectivists" and Proudhonists—supporters of private smallholding—intensified within international socialist ranks.

Two resolutions on landed property were before the Basel assembly: (1) "The Congress declares that society has the right to abolish individual ownership of the soil and to make the land communal property [*et de faire entrer le sol à la communauté*]," and (2) "It declares, further, that it is necessary today that the land should become collective property [*propriété collective*]." The first proposition stated the principle; the second, the urgent need to act on that principle. The General Council of the International gave its formal support to the two resolutions, and the congress passed them by an overwhelming majority. The propositions received the support of a wide variety of European socialists, many of whom were soon to find themselves on opposite sides of the Marx-Bakunin struggle: Marx and Bakunin both supported the "collectivist" position, as did Liebknecht, César de Paepe, Johann Philipp Becker, Hermann Jung, and James Guillaume.[2] The rift between the "statist" Marx and the anarchist Bakunin, later to split and destroy the International, was not yet visible. As one defeated Proudhonist expressed himself after

1. *La Première Internationale: Recueil de documents*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1962), 1:361–79, 405–6.

2. Ibid., 2:61–92; *General'nyi Sovet pervogo internatsionala, 1868–1870* (Moscow, 1964), p. 223; I. A. Bakh, "Marks i agrarnyi vopros v I Internatsionale," *Voprosy istorii*, 1958, no. 5, p. 68; César de Paepe, *Mémoire sur la propriété terrienne* (Brussels, 1868, and Basel, 1869). The vote on the two resolutions was 54 to 4 with 13 abstentions and 53 to 8 with 10 abstentions, respectively.

Basel, exaggerating somewhat the role of Bakunin and Marx, "Russo-German communism" had carried the day.[3]

The Basel Congress closed with a request for all member parties to draw up recommendations on how to implement the resolutions on landed property. The most significant response to this request was a manifesto to rural laborers written by the veteran German socialist Johann Philipp Becker, *Manifest an die landwirtschaftliche Bevölkerung* (Geneva, 1869). The question of landed property received extensive coverage in the European socialist press, but the Becker manifesto quickly established itself as the most definitive statement of the international socialist agrarian doctrine. Over the next three decades it appeared in several editions: in the original German as well as in French, Serbo-Croatian, Polish, Italian, Spanish, and Russian.[4]

The manifesto described the systematic impoverishment of agriculture in capitalist Germany, France, and England. It recommended establishment of agricultural collectives and cooperatives geared to more efficient production and organized more justly on the basis of communal ownership (*gemeinschaftlichen Betriebe* in the original; *obshchinnaia obrabotka* in the Russian translation). Land should become the common property of all humanity; it should not be sliced up and parceled out to individual owners. The rural laborer should join hands with his urban brother, the proletarian, and strive for the communalization of agricultural and industrial property and management. The communes (*Gemeinden*; *obshchiny*) should form a federative union. All convinced socialists should travel from village to village spreading the good word among the people, becoming apostles of social democracy.

3. G. M. Steklov, *History of the First International* (New York, 1968, reprint of the original 1928 English translation), p. 141.

4. The manifesto was published as a separate brochure and on the pages of Becker's widely read *Vorbote* (December 1869, no. 12, pp. 177–84). A French translation by Guillaume also appeared as a brochure, *Manifeste aux Travailleurs des Campagnes publié par le Comité de propagande des Sections allemandes de l'Association Internationale des travailleurs* (Geneva, 1870), and was reprinted in the French socialist journal *L'Égalité* (Feb. 26–Mar. 26, 1870, nos. 9, 10, 13). It was incorporated into the Mainz Social Democratic Workers Union Party program, inserted into the published protocols of the All-German Social Democratic Workers Congress in Eisenach, and discussed at the Congress of the German Social Democratic Workers Party at Stuttgart, June 1870. See Jacques Freymond, ed., *Études et documents sur la Première Internationale en Suisse* (Geneva, 1964), p. 216.

The Spanish translation of the manifesto, *Manifiesto a los trabajadores de los campos* (Geneva, 1870), was a central component of the rural socialism of the Spanish sections of the International; Max Nettlau, *La Première Internationale en Espagne (1868–1888)* (Dordrecht, 1969), p. 63.

The Russian translation, *Manifest k zemledel'cheskomu naseleniiu*, was published first on the presses of *Narodnoe delo* (Geneva, 1870). See B. P. Koz'min, *Russkaia Sektsiia I Internatsionala* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 190–91.

One could hardly imagine a message more congenial to the needs of the Russian movement, which was just then preparing itself for the first serious and extensive effort to carry doctrines of revolutionary socialism "to the people."

The Russian translation was most likely the handiwork of a member of the Russian Section of the International. The author of the manifesto, Becker, was in a sense a sponsor of the Section and helped them organize not long after the Basel Congress. The Section was the first Russian revolutionary group to adhere explicitly to the principles of international socialism. The Section's journal, *Narodnoe delo* (*The People's Cause*), helped disseminate the discussions and resolutions of the International, giving special emphasis to the decisions on land communalization and the Becker manifesto. *Narodnoe delo* circulated and was read in activist circles in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, Nizhny Novgorod, Viatka, Kazan, Odessa, Ekaterinburg, and other centers of socialist activity in the early 1870s. The Section maintained connection with the internal movement in its impressionable infancy and was the first direct link between active Russian socialists and other European parties and programs.[5]

The tribunal of international socialism suggested that the prospects for a communal future were as good in Russia as anywhere else. The Russian Section reinforced that suggestion, insisting that Russian revolutionism and the workers' movements in the West were but branches of the same vast cause. The agrarian program of the International provided the most viable solution to the problem of syncretizing proletarian socialism with peasant socialism; rural communalization was consistent with the doctrine of industrial communalization. The Section informed Russian socialists that the International had decided the countryside should become the property of the whole society and should be organized into "collectives (into communal [*obshchinnuiu*] property), into that form of property which we more directly and precisely term communal landownership [*obshchinnym zemlevladeniem*]."[6] Just as the Russian translator of Becker's manifesto had rendered *Gemeinde*, the German term for commune, as *obshchina*, so also did the Russian Section find the appropriate Russian language for the resolutions of the Basel Congress on communal landed property:

> Le Congrès déclare que la société a le droit d'abolir la propriété individuelle du sol et de faire entrer le sol à la communauté. Il déclare

5. B. S. Itenberg, *Dvizhenie revoliutsionnogo narodnichestva* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 117–20; and I. S. Knizhnik-Vetrov, "K voprosu o sviaziakh Russkoi Sektsii I Internatsionala," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1964, no. 4, pp. 91–97.

6. "Russkoe sotsial'no-revoliutsionnoe delo v ego sootnoshenii s rabochim dvizheniem na Zapade," *Narodnoe delo*, 1869, no. 7–10, p. 142.

encore qu'il y a aujourd'hui nécessité de faire entrer le sol à la propriété collective.[7]

Kongress polagaet, chto obshchestvo imeet PRAVO unichtozhit' chastnuiu pozemel'nuiu sobstvennost' i zamenit' ee obshchinnym zemlevladeniem. On polagaet takzhe, chto obshchinnoe (kollektivnoe) vladenie zemleiu predstavliaetsia nastoiatel'noiu NEOBKHODIMOST'IU.[8]

The Section rejected Herzen's nationalistic idealization of the Russian folk. Although they championed the radical economic teachings of Chernyshevsky and shared his feeling that the peasant obshchina could be transformed in the image of the future cooperative society predicted by European socialism, the members of the Section did not exaggerate the potential of the commune, or reject Western guidance, or seek a special path for Russia. Their journal spoke in unmistakable terms: "We want to talk about our necessary relation to the movement in the West, about the influence which the social revolution in the West has and will continue to have on the cause of freedom in Russia, and about the element which will in its own time carry the Russian social structure to the new European life of working people."[9] They took pains to dissociate themselves from those publicists who were inclined to "fall into an idyll about the Russian peasant hut," as if it contained all the ingredients of a socialist future. Only the most rudimentary beginnings might be found there—only an embryonic starter which encouraged efforts at further development along lines laid down by the Basel Congress. True to the teachings of Chernyshevsky, the Russian Section maintained that the obshchina had to be revivified and transformed by Western socialism.[10]

The Russian Section voiced its feeling of shame that the old veterans, Ogarev and Bakunin, had recently gotten themselves tangled up in the incredible conspiracies of Sergei Nechaev, a student radical who claimed falsely to lead a large underground movement in Russia. Nechaev convinced the aging émigrés that a revolution was due in early 1870. Together they issued proclamations which called forth brigands, dissenters, and criminals—a

7. *La Première Internationale*, 2:61.

8. *Narodnoe delo*, 1869, no. 7–10, p. 124. The economic historian N. K. Karataev noted the similarity between the language of the Basel resolutions and the *Narodnoe delo* discussion of landed property. Karataev concluded, however, that the Russian Section had twisted the meaning of the resolutions in order to meet the need to idealize the obshchina. See *Ekonomicheskaia platforma russkoi sektsii I Internatsionala: Sbornik materialov*, ed. N. K. Karataev (Moscow, 1959), p. 21.

9. *Narodnoe delo*, 1869, no. 7–10, p. 126.

10. "Krest'ianskaia reforma i obshchinoe zemlevladenie" and "Internatsional'naia Assotsiatsiia i Rossiia," *Narodnoe delo*, 1870, no. 2 (n.s.), pp. 1–3, and no. 3, pp. 1–3. Regarding Chernyshevsky see G. G. Vodolazov, "Obshchina i revoliutsiia u Chernyshevskogo," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, 1963, no. 3, pp. 35–46.

whole army of the disinherited—to the revolutionary salvation of the land. Herzen was ill and died before the Nechaev fiasco reached its nadir. Ogarev was slipping into senility, and Bakunin cajoled him into giving considerable funds to Nechaev. But when Nechaev issued his journal, *Obshchina*, even he ungratefully disavowed any relation with Herzen's generation. In an open letter to Ogarev and Bakunin he expressed his feeling that they were the best of a bad lot, but he felt they would never play a central role in the real Russian revolution. Nechaev was not inclined toward the ideology of the veteran activists. His journal simply passed over the question of the peasant commune in silence, defending communal ownership and administration as basic to human nature (*priroda cheloveka*). Though he called the International a bourgeois organization, his brief essay on communal human nature recapitulated arguments at Brussels and Basel. And he informed his readers of the main socialist publications issued by the several member parties of the International. Nechaev accepted the communal goals of European socialism, whatever his reservations about the ability of the International, as currently constituted, to realize those goals.[11]

The Russian Section expressed its regret that the careers of Herzen and Ogarev should end so ingloriously, in association with Nechaev. The Section advised activists to turn away from older traditions, but also to shun the most recent conspiratorial trend. Russian revolutionists need make no special case for native peasant communitarianism, as did Herzen and Ogarev, nor need they support the dangerous machinations of Bakunin and Nechaev.[12]

The influence of the Russian Section might have been greater if it had not been for the opinion widely shared among Russian revolutionists that Nikolai Utin, the leading figure in the Section, had acted improperly when he maneuvered Bakunin out of the editorship of *Narodnoe delo* and supported even Marx's attack on him without qualification. But though the ethics of Utin were found wanting, the Russian Section's efforts to introduce

11. *Obshchina,* September 1870, no. 1, pp. 1, 4, and 8; reprinted in photocopy in *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 4 (Leiden, 1971), pp. 435–42. Nechaev's *Obshchina* should not be confused with Ogarev's projected journal of the same name, nor with the later *Obshchina* (see note 46).

12. "Po povodu proklamatsii: Zapros A. Gertsenu, N. Ogarevu i M. Bakuninu?" *Narodnoe delo,* 1869, no. 7–10, p. 167; and "Podgotovitel'naia rabota sotsial'noi revoliutsii," *Narodnoe delo,* 1870, no. 5 (n.s.), pp. 2–3. It is of some relevance here that Herzen and Ogarev did attend to the deliberations of the International. Herzen wrote Ogarev in 1869 that he regretted he had not been at the Basel Congress. He wanted to take part in the discussion of communal landholding only in order to speak of the "Russian obshchina which manifests collective ownership organically." See B. P. Koz'min, "K voprosu ob otnoshenii A. I. Gertsen k I Internatsionalu," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 54 (1955): 432. Ogarev's program for his projected journal, *Obshchina,* spoke of the special national character of the peasant obshchina but also of the need for joining the Russian obshchina "to the international cause." See *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 61 (1953): 575–78.

international socialism to Russian radicals found many supporters. After the demise of *Narodnoe delo* in 1870 the most influential Russian revolutionary journal of the decade, *Vpered!* (*Forward!*), edited by Peter Lavrov, continued those efforts.

Lavrov's socialism was from the outset derived from Western sources. In exile he joined a Paris section of the International, went on mission to Brussels and London to raise support for the Paris Commune, and, once he had determined to publish a Russian revolutionary journal, became an unshakable defender of international socialist doctrines. *Vpered!* published an extensive history of the International and an account of current international congresses and organizations in each of its first three volumes. Lavrov declined to take sides in the Marx-Bakunin battle. He felt that their differences stemmed more from personal ego than from concern for the good of the revolution. In much the same way he declined to give important place in his journal to any of the various local varieties of socialism. He was convinced that those who spent their energies in narrow personal or nationalistic politics could not expect to serve the future of scientific socialism. This was as true of "Russian Socialism" in the Herzen tradition as of any other provincial species of radicalism. The better future was the same everywhere: international socialism.

Lavrov employed the term *obshchina* in the generic rather than the specific Russian sense. He accepted the socialist goal of "communal" organization of the future society without involving himself deeply in the question of the Russian peasant commune. In his programmatic article and throughout *Vpered!* he predicted that the socialist transformation of the peasant commune lay in the "future of the majority of the Russian population." He was as sensitive as any socialist to the need for special tailoring of socialist doctrines to special environments. But he continued, "The future of the Slavs, *as of all mankind*, consists in this slogan: science and the obshchina, truth and labor, war against idols and monopoly!" He dedicated his journal to the "ideal of a European federation of free obshchinas." Lavrov did not restrict his socialist vision to the peasant commune but employed the word *obshchina* as the Russian equivalent of the German *Gemeinde* or the French *commune*, in harmony with international socialist doctrine.[13]

13. "Nasha Programma," reprinted most recently in *Revoliutsionnoe narodnichestvo 70-kh godov XIX veka*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1964–65), 1:32–38 (hereafter cited as *RN*). Ogarev complained to Lavrov that the muzhik would not understand all the "foreign" words in his journal ("eksploatatsiia," for example) and that a language more akin to the simple popular tongue should be used. Lavrov answered patiently that those who knew of the West European movement would have no difficulty with his language. See Ogarev, *Izbrannye sotsial'no-politicheskie i filosofskie proizvedeniia*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1952–56), 2:547, 551, and 647.

Bakunin was clearly more inclined to exaggerate the revolutionary potential of the Russian peasant than any other major figure of the day, except Herzen himself, but he recognized that several inherent weaknesses in the character of Russian village life had to be overcome before anything like modern socialism could be realized there. Not long after the Basel Congress he wrote that in the Russian obshchina Western communal aspirations were "in part" being realized: in its collective ownership of the soil and in its "embryo" of a communal political organization. But the Russian rural community was on the whole a mechanical amalgam of innumerable separate obshchinas without any organic bond between them, only an artificial attachment provided solely from the outside by the official power of the state. Within the separate obshchinas the individual was fearfully repressed. Without independence, without initiative, without thought, and without individual revolt, progress there was impossible. It was just this that Bakunin would not allow Slavophiles, or any other "blind admirers" of the obshchina, to forget.[14]

The Russian revolutionary movement was attracted to Bakunin not so much because he preserved certain characteristics of an older romantic view of the Russian peasant but because he was one of the powerful figures in the International. He contributed to the formation of the agrarian doctrine at the Basel Congress, and his most influential revolutionary tract, *State and Anarchy*, recommended that Russian revolutionists establish ties of solidarity with the "powerful revolutionary movement of the proletariat of Western Europe." He was most favorably remembered by the Russian movement as the defender of the principle of local governance against the threat of centralism or "statism," and his memory lingered in those programs which insisted on federative independence of future communes. His teachings on the Russian folk influenced Russian socialism much less in the direction of idealizing the peasant obshchina than in the direction of exaggerating the readiness of the folk for rebellion. He was generally cautious when he dealt with peasant mores and set his discussion of the peasant commune in the framework of European socialist principles.[15]

It was Peter Tkachev who stood nearly alone among his contemporaries

14. Bakunin MS account of his dealings with Nikolai Utin, written July–August 1870, held in the Amsterdam Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis. I am indebted to Arthur Lehning, editor of the series *Archives Bakounine*, for allowing me to see the typed manuscript of the fifth volume in this series (due to appear soon), which contains the full text of the manuscript cited.

15. "Appendix A" to *Gosudarstvennost' i anarkhiia*, reprinted most recently in *RN*, 1:38–55. Also see Max Nettlau, "Bakunin und die russische revolutionäre Bewegung in des Jahren 1868–1873," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (Leipzig, 1915), pp. 357–442.

in his open attack on the application of European socialist programs to Russia. After a brief association with Lavrov and *Vpered!* in 1874 he set off on his own tangent. His outlook derived in part from the almost universally scorned Nechaev. Like Nechaev, Tkachev rejected open, mass organization in favor of what was called the "Jacobin," "Blanquist," or conspiratorial approach to the Russian revolution. He rejected the German social democratic model explicitly: "The situation in our country is altogether unique. It has nothing in common with the situation of any other country in Western Europe."[16] Tkachev did not mean that socialism was impossible in Russia, nor did he mean that the West had nothing to teach Russian revolutionists. He had himself profitably studied the writings of Marx. His own program, once formulated, expressed the general tenets of the International. But he put his faith in the conspiratorial success of a dedicated socialist minority; he had no faith in the undirected "people." It was precisely this that influenced his criticism of social democracy.

Tkachev thought that "German" socialism, by which he meant democratic mass action, was impossible under Russian conditions. He disbelieved in the inherent ability of the peasant and his obshchina to create a socialist order. He asserted that the Russian obshchina was "founded on the principle of temporary private property," and that a revolutionary minority would have to *reconstruct* the native institution along socialist lines "into an *obshchina-Kommuna*, founded on the principle of general joint ownership of the means of production and general joint enterprise. . . ." In words directly reminiscent of Brussels and Basel resolutions, the first issue of Tkachev's journal, *Nabat* (*Tocsin*), affirmed that the means of production currently in the hands of private owners must be expropriated and given over to communal ownership.[17]

Tkachev cut himself off from the mainstream of revolutionary activism not because he was critical of the obshchina but because he held out no hope

16. P. N. Tkachev, *Izbrannye sochineniia na sotsial'no-politicheskie temy*, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1932–37), 3:89.

17. "Zadachi nashego zhurnala," *Nabat*, November 1875, unnumbered programmatic issue, pp. 3–5. Koz'min is correct to note that Tkachev in polemical exchange with Engels asserted that the Russian folk were socialist by instinct and habit and "despite their ignorance, stand much nearer socialism than the peoples of Western Europe even though the latter are more developed." See B. P. Koz'min, *Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi mysli v Rossii* (Moscow, 1961), p. 388. Koz'min quotes Tkachev's more typical expression of contempt for the socialist capability of the Russian people: "The people are unable to save themselves. The people, left to their own devices, are unable to arrange their own fate in conformity with their real interests, *are unable to implement the idea of the socialist revolution or make it real in their life*" (p. 395; the italics are Koz'min's). Koz'min fails to distinguish the position maintained out of polemical exuberance from the more consistently expressed position.

for a revolution of and by, as well as for, the *narod*. Tkachev's revolutionary elitism revived the "statist" element in Chernyshevsky's teachings, an element shunned by most activists in the first years of revolutionary socialism.[18] A revolutionary circle in Russia formulated a letter to Lavrov on the subject of Tkachev, pledging their support to *Vpered!* because its "fundamental tendency" was "purely socialist."[19] Tkachev's views reminded them of Nechaev and the sort of "political" conspiracy which they opposed in the name of a "purely socialist" program: a mass movement modeled on the socialist parties within the International. Western social democracy and the International, they thought, was by far the more satisfactory path to follow. The doctrines of the European movement required neither idolization nor depreciation of the Russian folk. Those who struggled against the influence of Nechaev and Tkachev employed the doctrines of European socialism, just as the Russian Section employed them against the memory of Herzen.[20]

The first consequential group of activists within Russia, the "Great Society of Propaganda" or "Chaikovtsy," was in large measure called into being by a desire to negate the influence of Nechaev and to establish the socialist movement on a firm popular basis. Mark Natanson, the most energetic organizer of the group, had been a tireless opponent of Nechaev in 1869 and 1870. The small *kruzhki* (circles) which made up the larger group had rarely discussed socialism before the Nechaev affair. But from 1870 on, their attention turned increasingly to the problems of communalism. Anyone who insists on specifying a native communal institution as a source of Russian socialism would do well to study certain student *kruzhki*, *kompanii*, and *skhodki* (assemblies). A contemporary account of the origins of the Chaikovtsy, written by participants, attributes their emphasis on socialism to a strong "communal inclination" (*obshchinnaia sklonnost'*) in their circle. The *kruzhok* often became a "school of practical socialism."[21] And a growing awareness of the European socialist movement and of the programs of the International was also a decisive factor. The Chaikovtsy hoped to move beyond "Jacobin" conspiracy, beyond the student *kruzhok* as well, in the direction of a broad or-

18. See Tkachev's introduction to his publication of Chernyshevsky's two articles on the obshchina and the state, "Kritika filosofskikh predubezhdenii protiv obshchinago vladeniia" and "Ekonomicheskaia deiatel'nost' i zakonodatel'stvo," *Obshchina i gosudarstvo* (Geneva, 1877), especially pp. vi–xiii.

19. *RN*, 1:172.

20. N. F. Bel'chikov, "'Bibliograf' (1869 g.)," *Russkaia zhurnalistika* (Moscow, 1930), pp. 133–235; and B. P. Koz'min, "S. G. Nechaev i ego protivniki v 1868–1869 gg.," *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie 1860-kh godov* (Moscow, 1932), pp. 204–16.

21. A nearly contemporary manuscript history of the Chaikovtsy was printed for the first time in *RN*, 1:202–40.

ganization of the toiling masses, constructed on the pattern of the European parties within the International.[22]

Besides the works of Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, Bakunin, Marx, and Lassalle, the works of V. V. Bervi-Flerovsky could be found on the Chaikovtsy's revolutionary library shelves. His *Condition of the Working Class in Russia* painted a richly detailed picture of rural and urban labor conditions. He was somewhat inclined to express national pride in the potential of the obshchina, but did not close his eyes to its many faults. A participant in the movement, O. V. Aptekman, remembered that Bervi-Flerovsky taught them that the Russian peasant was unlike the Western proletarian mainly because he was not as free. The muzhik was "indigent, naked, begging his way from village to village across the countryside of 'Christian Rus' '—indigent and starving, bound like a slave in his galley, chained without any rights in his 'obshchina.' "[23] Bervi-Flerovsky criticized private property in land and advocated worker control of the factory and farm. His *ABC's of the Social Sciences* explicitly assumed that Russia was a part of a general European movement. An agent of the tsarist police identified the program of the "International society," the First International, in the book.[24]

Similarly Prince Peter Kropotkin influenced the Chaikovtsy program in the direction of European socialism. Before joining the group, Kropotkin traveled to Western Europe in 1872 to learn more about the International. Like Bakunin he was repelled by the "statists" in the organization. But he found much to his liking in Zurich, Geneva, and other important centers of international socialism in Switzerland. In the Russian student colony in Zurich he came across many of the young men and women who were soon to join underground circles back home. Closely familiar with West European parties and the debates within the International, Russian students from abroad infused life into every phase of the revolutionary socialist movement on their return. From the socialist ferment in Zurich, Kropotkin had received a "deep impression" which shaped his views from that time on. He was converted to the cause of international socialism as it was understood by the "federalists," and became a member of the Jura Federation of the International.[25]

22. See the memoirs of Nikolai Chaikovsky as recorded by G. H. Perris, *Russia in Revolution* (London, 1905), pp. 193–206; the memoirs of L. B. Gol'denberg, *Katorga i ssylka*, 1924, no. 3 (10), pp. 98–102; and Iu. M. Rapoport, *Iz istorii sviazei russkikh revoliutsionerov s osnovopolozhnikami nauchnogo sotsializma* (*K. Marks i G. Lopatin*) (Moscow, 1960), pp. 11–18.

23. O. V. Aptekman, "Flerovskii-Bervi i Chaikovtsy," *Byloe*, 1922, no. 19, p. 128.

24. N. Flerovsky [V. V. Bervi], *Polozhenie rabochego klassa v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1869) and *Azbuka sotsial'nykh nauk* (St. Petersburg, 1872); N. K. Karataev, *Istoriia russkoi ekonomicheskoi mysli*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Moscow, 1959), pp. 317–18.

25. Jan Meijer, *Knowledge and Revolution: The Russian Colony in Zuerich (1869–*

Kropotkin returned to his homeland with as much pertinent literature as he could smuggle in. After joining the Chaikovtsy he penned the group's most characteristic ideological and programmatic statement, "Should We Busy Ourselves with a Consideration of the Ideal of the Future Society?" The statement centered on an image of the future derived from international socialism. Following Bakunin, Kropotkin treated the "statists" severely. But he argued that all socialists, whether anarchists or "statists," were in agreement in their fundamental aversion to private property and their desire to create a society in which the means of production—the land, the factories, and all instruments of labor—would be communal property. It is in this sense that he employed the term *obshchina*: rural obshchinas, craft obshchinas, factory obshchinas, even railroad obshchinas. Kropotkin's formulation of socialist land communalization conformed to Brussels and Basel decisions on that question. If the land and other means of production were to be communalized, it meant to him that they would be organized in obshchinas, both agricultural and industrial.

Far from exaggerating the socialist capability of the peasant, Kropotkin recognized that in Russia special obstacles impeded the socialist cause. Extensive preparation and organization were necessary. The Russian worker and peasant were not yet strongly organized and consequently could not consider active participation in the International. But the people must learn about the great movement of modern times, the international workers' movement. Russia would always be marked by her own special characteristics, but, Kropotkin said, "there can be no argument that in a short while every socialist movement in the West will be echoed in our people also; every firm success of Western Internationalists will be greeted by us with sympathy and with interest and will encourage us also; and in addition it is absolutely certain that the decisions of the International will be debated also by us, not only by cultured youth, but also by circles of workers."[26] Like Lavrov, Kropotkin took certain fundamental principles of the West European movement as the standard for Russian socialism. His communal ideal did not derive from the peasant obshchina but from the socialist ideal of communal ownership of all means of production. He was pleased that there existed in Russia the possibility of a rural socialist future. But he did not feel compelled to demand any unique or superior status for the Russian peasant. Russia was not ahead of the West in the struggle for socialism; she had to catch up.

1873) (Assen, 1955), pp. 82–84; Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (re-edition of 1899 text, edited with supplementary material by J. A. Rogers, Garden City, 1962), pp. 179–80.

26. "Dolzhny li my zaniat'sia rassmotreniem ideala budushchego stroia?" reprinted in *RN*, 1:115.

The dominant purpose of the Chaikovtsy and other early adherents to the socialist cause was to see that Russia joined the European struggle with all due speed. Young radicals who set out for the provinces were convinced of the unique progressive role which the common folk were destined by history to play. In this they reflected a not unusual radical democratism of which the German socialist Lassalle was both an example and a source for the Chaikovtsy. The Russian translation of Lassalle's *Arbeiterprogramm*, published by the Chaikovtsy in 1872, expressed for the Russian laborer the same messianic hopes Lassalle had expressed for the German laborer a decade earlier. Addressing workers, Lassalle said, "You are fortunate because your own true interests coincide with the beating pulse of history, with the driving life principle of moral development. . . . That is why the lordship [*gospodstvo*] in the government of the fourth estate would bring with it the dawn of a morality, culture, and science as yet unwitnessed in history." The cornerstone of Lassalle's—and the Chaikovtsy's—faith in the "fourth estate" was the moral attitude of the people toward the state: the people understood that "for a moral social life a *solidarity* of interests, *communality* [*obshchnost'*] and *mutuality* in development were essential above all else."[27]

The Chaikovtsy's communal paradigm was not the peasant obshchina but the international socialist ideal of the *Gemeinde* or *commune*. They usually understood that they were novices with little real understanding or factual knowledge of the *narod*, but they sought to teach socialism to the people. They "went to the people" convinced that the folk would respond favorably to their "little books." Precisely this conviction, to which both Lavrov and Bakunin contributed, constituted their idealization of the folk. This was clearly not a distinctly "Russian" conviction but was rather a conviction shared with the European socialist movement, just as the brochures which expressed that conviction were also shared. Becker's manifesto was distributed among the Russian peasantry. In addition to the Russian Section edition, two separate editions of the manifesto were published in the years of propaganda and agitation. Handwritten copies supplemented the published Russian editions.[28] A translation of a Paris Commune manifesto written by André Léo and Benoît Malon, "Aux travailleurs des campagnes," was also distributed.[29]

Other "little books" written exclusively for Russian distribution repeated and reinforced the international message without sacrificing their pointedly

27. F. Lassalle, *Programma rabotnikov: Ob osobennoi sviazi sovremennogo istoricheskogo perioda s ideei rabochago sosloviia* (Geneva, 1872), pp. 46–48.

28. *Manifest ot Tsentral'nogo komiteta nemetskoi vetvi Mezhdunarodnogo tovarishchestva rabotnikov k zemledel'cheskomu naseleniiu* (Geneva, 1871), and *Manifest k zemledel'cheskomu naseleniiu i protsess L. Neimeiera* (Geneva, 1875). See B. S. Itenberg, *Pervyi Internatsional i revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 56–57.

29. B. S. Itenberg, *Rossiia i Parizhskaia Kommuna* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 155–57.

Russian relevance. They spoke of gentry and merchant exploiters, and of the alliance of those exploiters with priests, bureaucrats, and the tsar himself. They did not distinguish between the plights of European and Russian workers; on the contrary they emphasized the similarities, often confusing the differences. But like the Becker manifesto they emphasized the gruesome consequences of capitalism in the West. Naturally they urged that capitalism not be allowed to work the same havoc in Russia. Precisely this rejection of modern capitalist economics, to which the whole European socialist tradition contributed, constituted their only clearly articulated anti-Westernism.

The "little books" depicted the International as the world center of the struggle against capitalism and pointed toward a future in which a "worker's order" (*rabotnitskii poriadok*) would bring an end to exploitation of toilers everywhere. In one fanciful pamphlet, a wizard transports a distressed laborer to a meeting of the International in Brussels, where workers learn "to own everything in common." The laborer is told that the only way to end exploitation is to resist the spread of private ownership: "Do not divide up the land; place ownership of the land in a communal assembly. Do not divide up capital or factories; place ownership in a communal assembly, in large cooperative associations of workers." This pamphlet used the terms *mir* and *artel* as Russian translations of international socialist goals.[30]

A group of Bakunists abroad issued a revolutionary journal, *Rabotnik* (*Worker*), designed especially for distribution among the folk. From January 1875 to March 1876 *Rabotnik* adhered to the central purpose set forth in N. I. Zhukovsky's initial lead article: "So far as we are able, we want to acquaint the Russian working people with the life and doings [*s zhit'em-byt'em i delam*] of the working people of other lands. . . ." The cause of Russian workers was the cause of all workers, just as the cause of the urban worker was also the cause of the rural worker. Z. K. Ralli warned against constitutional monarchists, liberal republicans, and "Jacobin" or "statist" revolutionists who sought "to dismiss the tsar and sit in his place." Instead, Zhukovsky continued, workers should rely on themselves in preparation for rebellion [*bunt*]—not just any sort of rebellion, but rebellion with a purpose. Workers all over Europe knew that "rebellion without conspiratorial union [*sgovor*] or mutually agreed-upon plans will yield little result." Zhukovsky contributed a series of articles on the International Workingmen's Association, the one big *sgovor* of all nations which planned the transfer of land and factories into

30. "Skazka o Mudritse Naumovne" (1873), reprinted in *Agitatsionnaia literatura russkikh revoliutsionnykh narodnikov* (Leningrad, 1970), p. 227. Also see "Russkomu narodu" by A. V. Dolgushin (1873), pp. 74–85; "O pravde i krivde" by Sergei Kravchinsky (1875), pp. 101–23; and "Iz ognia da v polymia!" also by Kravchinsky (1876), pp. 124–55.

the hands of those who labored there: "Just as the land must be transferred from the gentry to an obshchina of the peasantry, so also must shops, factories, and foundries be transferred to artels of factory and foundry workers. . . ."[31]

Ralli devoted special attention to the Russian peasant obshchina and Ukrainian peasant *gromada* (commune). He concluded that of the two the Russian obshchina more nearly answered to the international socialist standard, but even it was not adequate. The great inequalities of wealth that existed within and between different obshchinas as well as between urban and rural workers meant, he said, that the "establishment of a true [i.e., socialist] obshchina in Russia is not possible."[32] The International offered the only way to true "land and liberty." The workers of Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, and other European states had determined that the land and factories belonged to all the people, not just the land to the peasant and the factory to the proletarian. All means of production should become the equal property of all people. This could be done only within the great international *sgovor*.

The lengthy and nearly unrestrained testimony of those participants in the "going to the people" who became defendants in the two major trials of the decade, the trials of the "50" and the "193," revealed that they adhered to socialist goals and expressed an awareness of the relation between the West European and Russian causes.[33] During a stormy session before the court, I. N. Myshkin claimed that the International Workingmen's Association had immense influence on the socialist cause in Russia.[34] During his trial, G. F. Zdanovich, who had been an active organizer and propagandist, attacked head-on the notion that Russia differed significantly from the West and would experience a unique future. Civilization, humanism, and socialism were shared international concepts. Science recognized no nationalities. Zdanovich was convinced that Europe showed the way out of Russian backwardness: "The study of European civilization indicates that Russia absolutely cannot count on separating herself from the family of European peoples; on the contrary she must link her fate to the fate of the West and together work for better conditions of life."[35] Zdanovich thus implicitly contended that the inclination to idealize Russia and isolate her from the West was reactionary. Revolutionists must link Russia's fate to the fate of the West and work in tandem for "better conditions of life": European socialism. Count Pahlen, minister of justice, was on the mark when he reported to the tsar that propagandists

31. [Zhukovsky], "Pochemu my pechataem gazetu?" *Rabotnik*, 1875, no. 1, pp. 1–2; [Ralli], "Blagodeteli," no. 4, p. 3; [Zhukovsky], "Bunt i reform," no. 3, p. 1; and "Mezhdunarodnoe tovarishchestvo rabotnikov," nos. 6, 7, 10, and 13.

32. "Zemlia i Volia," *Rabotnik*, 1875, no. 10, p. 2.

33. *Protsess 193-kh* (Moscow, 1906) and *Protsess 50-ti* (London, 1877).

34. *RN*, 1:378.

35. Ibid., p. 358.

among the people were spreading the influence of the International Workingmen's Association.[36]

The influence of the First International waned noticeably in the second half of the decade, both in Western Europe and Russia. But the agrarian communal doctrine continued to shape programs for years to come. In Germany Wilhelm Liebknecht reissued *Zu Grund- und Bodenfrage* (Leipzig, 1876), a much augmented version of a paper he had delivered at socialist meetings in defense of the Basel agrarian resolutions. Liebknecht insisted, as he had done since 1870, that socialization of the land harmonized with general socialization of the means of production. In a manner agreeable to Russian socialists, he asserted that socialization "is far easier in the village than in the city" because "*the Gemeinde, the village, is a natural association*, the Gemeinde in general is nothing at all but the village commune [*Dorfgemeinde*]." He recognized that the *Dorfgemeinden in Association* were "not socialist in the narrow sense of the word." But they could well serve as "a natural transition to real socialist organization."[37]

Thus the highly regarded leader of German Social Democracy, the most powerful socialist party in Europe, continued to defend the fundamental socialist agrarian program of the Basel Congress. He shared with Russian socialists the hope that the rural population of his nation might be spared capitalist development, whether in the form of English commercial latifundia or French smallholding. He shared the hope for a socialist escape from the encroachments of capitalism and the feeling that certain native rural institutions might facilitate the escape.

When French socialism revived on a new and much broader base in 1877, party leaders were quick to reaffirm the collectivism of the Basel Congress. The second Congress of the Workers of France, held in Lyon in January 1878, repeated the Basel request that all workers' groups draw up recommendations on how to collectivize the land and all means of production. Land collectivization was frequently the subject of discussion on the pages of *L'Égalité*.[38] The Russian socialist journal, *Nachalo*, edited by L. K. Bukh, A. I. Ventskovsky, and others, reported on the revival of the French movement and discussed the Ghent and Lyon congresses. The journal highlighted

36. "Zapiska ministera iustitsii grafa Palena," published originally on the *Rabotnik* presses in 1875, reprinted in *Aktivnoe narodnichestvo 70-kh godov* (Moscow, 1912), p. 174.

37. *Zur Grund- und Bodenfrage*, pp. 184–86.

38. "Le Congrès de Lyon et le collectivisme," *L'Égalité*, Feb. 17, 1878, pp. 1–2; also see Nov. 18, 1877, p. 1; Dec. 23, 1877, pp. 2–4; and Jan. 20, 1878, a long letter from Tula on the Russian *mir* and its limited socialist uses, pp. 6–7. Bebel, Liebknecht, and de Paepe were regular foreign contributors to *L'Égalité*.

the French agrarian program, with its now almost venerable international pedigree.[39]

Nachalo was the first revolutionary socialist journal published secretly within Russia, and its program echoed the language of the International, calling for the transfer of land and the means of production into the hands of "collectives." The editors did not present the peasant obshchina as a model of the socialist collective, but did discover "inclinations" toward the destruction of the existing state and "affinity" with socialist propaganda there. Collective responsibility for redemption payments and internal passports locked the individual peasant within the obshchina: "The obshchina is vigilantly protected by gendarmes and procurators from every intellectual influence and political development, and bound in ignorance under the control of inspectors responsible for public education." Despite all the autocratic encroachments, the obshchina managed to preserve some vestige of legitimate popular life forms: "The peasant obshchina, caught in the vise of a fiscal system, degraded by administrative authority into a characterless, fiscal, quitrent article of the state, vigilantly held in the gloom of ignorance, protected from the external influence of intellectual forces, has nonetheless worked out among the people a world view which has an obvious affinity with the universal humanitarian principles of socialist propaganda."[40] *Nachalo* thus adjusted its universal socialist program to the needs of a much compromised native environment where a certain rebellious potential and affinity with socialist ideology might be turned to advantage.

The continuing influence of European socialist doctrines was reflected by most other groups in the years of crisis which followed the "going to the people" at mid-decade. The groups in St. Petersburg who had supported Lavrov's *Vpered!* planned to issue a socialist journal in Russia, but they were forestalled by the appearance of *Nachalo*. Their journal was to have been called *Narodnik* (*Populist*), and its program stated adherence to the "scientific principles" of socialism and disavowed any desire to pander to baseless illusions about the folk.[41] Another socialist circle in Chernigov predicted the "destruction of the right to private property in land and in the means of production and its replacement by communal utilization [*obshchinnym pol'zovaniem*] of this property." The program also provided for the elimination of the right to inheritance, following a Basel resolution on that issue. Both in

39. *Nachalo,* March 1878, no. 1, reprinted in *Revoliutsionnaia zhurnalistika 70-kh godov* (n.p., 1906), p. 5.

40. *Nachalo,* April 1878, no. 3, reprinted in *Revoliutsionnaia zhurnalistika 70-kh godov*, pp. 75–76, 79.

41. *"Vpered!" 1873–1877: Materialy iz arkhiva Valeriana Nikolaevicha Smirnova,* ed. Boris Sapir, 2 vols. (Dordrecht, 1970), 2:521–25.

spirit and language the Chernigov program corresponded to Brussels and Basel resolutions.[42] In Odessa the programs of the West European workers' parties were distinctly reflected in the program of the Southern Russian Union of Workers.[43] Similarly the program of the Northern Union of Russian Workers, led by Stepan Khalturin and Viktor Obnorsky, included a bold and unmistakable statement of unity with the European movement: "The Northern Union of Russian Workers issues its program, closely adhering in its goals to the social-democratic party of the West. . . . Our Western brothers have already raised the banner of liberation for the millions—it remains for us but to answer their call." The first three sections of the program called for the complete destruction of the existing state, its replacement by a federation of obshchinas, and the destruction of private landholding and its replacement by "communal landholding."[44]

The party known as Land and Liberty (Zemlia i Volia) was the most noteworthy attempt to reorganize the socialist cause in the late seventies. At its executive center and within most local groups, it felt itself a part of the European socialist movement. Some members wished to found the program on the economic doctrines of Marx. But the majority prevailed, and the second program stated its sympathies for the federalist international. In neither case did the party lose sight of its West European coordinates.

Land and Liberty maintained that the Russian people's fundamental dislike of private property and desire for fully autonomous obshchinas provided a "strong foundation" for the successful achievement of socialism. But the peasant commune was an incomplete foundation. Land and Liberty felt that only two-thirds of Russia was presently inclined toward communal landownership. The majority of even these peasant communes could not be deemed competent for modern socialist communalization. Land and Liberty did not confuse the peasant commune, as it existed, with the European socialist goal of communal organization of the means of production. Revolutionists within Land and Liberty, who were the first to refer to themselves regularly as "populists," assumed that Russia was far from naturally prepared for socialism. Consequently they acknowledged that after the revolution in Russia the socialist state would play a considerable role both in the initial phases of education and development of socialist habits and in the final transition to full socialism.[45]

42. *RN*, 1:140.

43. B. S. Itenberg, *"Iuzhnorossiiskii soiuz rabochikh": Pervaia proletarskaia organizatsiia v Rossii* (Moscow, 1954), pp. 40–41.

44. G. A. Kuklin, *Severnyi soiuz russkikh rabochikh i Stepan Khalturin (1878–1882)* (Geneva, 1904), pp. 5–9. The program originally appeared in 1879.

45. The programs of Land and Liberty were published in *Arkhiv "Zemli i Voli" i "Narodnoi Voli"* (Moscow, 1932), pp. 53–54.

The confusion and crisis which gripped the movement in the last years of the decade are nowhere better reflected than on the pages of the journal *Obshchina* (subtitled *La Commune*), which first appeared in January 1878. The publication brought together a wide variety of activists—Ralli continued his émigré propaganda efforts, joined by V. N. Cherkezov, P. B. Akselrod, D. A. Klements, and Sergei Kravchinsky (Stepniak). On the editorial board were some of the most refractory Bakunist rebels. One would expect them above all others to overestimate the potential of the peasant commune and underestimate the significance of the Western movement, particularly in a moment of critical transition. The programmatic articles, however, averred the principles of international socialism as well as the decision to communalize all means of production and organize them "within a free union of autonomous obshchinas." The program disavowed any ties with "Jacobin" or "statist" tendencies: "Among the several socialist groups and organizations of the West we put the International in first place because it expresses most fully the ideal of international and equal solidarity of the laboring classes. We say further that we consider ourselves adherents only to the teachings of the Federalist International and proponents of its ideas in the Russian language."[46]

Ralli's persistent translation of "Paris Commune" as Paris Obshchina is the key to the wider meaning of the word *obshchina* in the title of the journal. In an article commemorating the Paris uprising, he offered his version of the socialist program of the Paris Commune: the transference of all private property, factories, shops, and the land, "into the collective property of the obshchina." Of special interest to Ralli was the manifesto "Aux travailleurs des campagnes" by Léo and Malon. As Ralli read it, the manifesto invited the peasantry to join in a vast national system of federated obshchinas.[47]

Obshchina contained a sharply critical essay by Cherkezov on the Russian peasant commune. Cherkezov concluded that the obshchina in its current form—a centralized fiscal agency, well suited to "all the needs of Russian despotism"—was in fact not widely loved by the peasant. The solidarity of the obshchina had been converted into a "diabolical delusion from which our peasantry flees as from a pestilence."[48] Perhaps the most significant essay in the journal was "The Transitional Moment of Our Party" by Akselrod. He warned against rushing for quick success under Russian conditions, because in the absence of a clearly established and practical socialist program, a future order of Russian peasant obshchinas might be conservative and

46. See the *Ob"iavlenie* (pp. 1–8), a programmatic flier that was published just before *Obshchina* first appeared in January 1878.

47. "Parizhskaia Obshchina," *Obshchina*, 1878, no. 3–4, p. 3.

48. Ibid., no. 1, p. 24.

despotic beyond imagination.[49] Jacob Stefanovich followed the Akselrod article with an essay which harkened back to the Herzen tradition. But Stefanovich's old-fashioned idealization of the peasant commune was an isolated incident, not just on the pages of *Obshchina* but throughout the decade.

The groups which emerged out of the crisis period in 1878–79, both George Plekhanov's General Land Repartition (Chernyi Peredel) and the larger People's Will (Narodnaia Volia), kept the European movement always within sight. Chernyi Peredel tried to harmonize its socialist program with the special conditions of Russia: "We recognize that socialism is the last word in the science of human society, and in view of that we feel that the triumph of collectivism in the realm of ownership and labor is the Alpha and Omega of progress in the economic structure of society."[50]

The People's Will similarly attempted to fuse general socialist principles with specifically Russian circumstances: "In our fundamental principles we are socialists and *narodniki*." They were socialists insofar as they envisaged a future communal order in Russia. They were *narodniki* insofar as they recognized certain obstacles—first of which was the autocracy—to the ultimate communal goal. The traditional popular principle—the right of the people to the land—still lived in Russia, they thought. But it was everywhere suppressed and at the most might serve only as an embryo of a future socialist state, because it lacked the requisite "absolutely new direction"—modern socialism.[51]

A workers' section of the People's Will stated the need to establish a program in harmony with socialist teachings. Echoing the position of the International, the group demanded that land and the means of production should become the property of all the people and that these should be organized not on an individual but on a collective basis in obshchinas, artels, and associations.[52] Akselrod's Northern Russian Society of Land and Liberty in early

49. Ibid., no. 8–9, p. 31.

50. Lead article in the first issue of *Chernyi peredel*, Jan. 15, 1880, reprinted in *RN*, 2:141.

51. Program of the Executive Committee of the People's Will, September–October 1879, printed in *RN*, 2:170–74. N. S. Rusanov, an active participant in the People's Will, devoted special attention to the formula "socialists and *narodniki*," highlighting the role of the First International as a concrete example of socialist organization and program ("Ideinyia osnovy 'Narodnoi Voli,'" *Byloe*, September 1907, p. 38). In a long review article devoted to two popular (and nonsocialist) studies in which the unique salvational qualities of the peasant obshchina were described, Rusanov exclaimed, "What an anachronism to utter these words in our time! Reading them, one thinks that Slavophiles of some sort out of the thirties have been resurrected." See *Noveishaia literatura po obshchinnomu zemlevladeniiu v Rossii* (Moscow, 1879), p. 43.

52. Program of workers, members of the People's Will, November 1880, reprinted in *RN*, 2:184.

1880 identified itself as a "socialist federalist group" adhering to the "principles of the International Workingmen's Association." Akselrod granted only that the obshchina in a few regions of northeastern Russia might be capable of direct transition to the socialist goal of collective landownership.[53]

The memory of the First International faded considerably in Russia after the arrests and trials at mid-decade, and almost totally after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. The revolutionary cause itself waned in a time of confusion and disenchantment. The movement splintered in several directions. But no significant fraction thought to base its socialism on the unreconstructed peasant obshchina. Many returned quickly to the earlier program, teaching socialism to the folk. D. T. Butsynsky, active in the Kharkov underground, wrote in 1880, "The greater part of the youth became skeptical of going to the people. Socialism itself they felt was somewhat foreign, somewhat unsuited to the Russian people. Whereas in the West socialism was the inevitable result of a proletariat, in Russia conditions were quite different." But testimony at the trial of the "193" restored faith in socialism. By the end of 1877 this underground circle had regrouped and was devoting itself once again to the study and advocacy of Western socialism.[54]

Others turned to terrorism. The term "populism" first came into wide usage in a time of dark pessimism rather than utopian optimism. The term did not imply a return to the Herzen tradition, but quickly came to mean an acceptance of terrorism. A. I. Zheliabov, who made the transition from the revolutionary socialist propaganda of the early part of the decade to the later terrorism, said at his trial for the assassination of Alexander II that "socialists were transformed into *narodniki* [i.e., became terrorists] after concluding that the obstacles created by the Russian state made it impossible to teach socialism to the Russian people."[55] But terrorists did not confuse terror with socialism; regicide was not communalism, and they knew it. They thought the assassination of the oppressive emperor would clear away the major obstacle to the free development of the socialist cause. The ultimate agrarian socialist transformation for which they were struggling was still very much in keeping with the principles of European socialism.

Still others urged the adoption of programs which meant something very much like just drifting along with whatever the peasant wanted, with little reference to ideology of any recognizable sort. For them populism did not

53. Program of the Northern Russian Society of Land and Liberty, January–February 1880, reprinted in *RN*, 2:148–50.

54. *RN*, 2:127.

55. "Iz rechei na sude A. I. Zheliabova, N. I. Kibal'chicha i S. L. Perovskoi," *Byloe*, 1906, no. 8, pp. 33–34; and Richard Pipes, "*Narodnichestvo:* A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review*, 1964, 23, no. 3 (September 1964): 445.

mean idealization of popular mores but frank acceptance of the people as they were, resigning themselves to circumstances that had frustrated their earlier efforts at revolutionary transformation. A. A. Kviatkovsky testified in 1880 that his efforts "to alter the popular world view" in the direction of workers socialism had proven fruitless. He still accepted a "very distant" ideal of popular self-governance, but had learned that a popular party must accept "popular desires, goals, as they actually are in the minds of the people." These desires and goals "of course will not correspond much at all to an ideal social order," but would at least correspond to practical reality.[56] In much the same way, the Marxist doctrine toward which Plekhanov and several others were moving consisted of resignation to a vast historical process which could not reasonably promise results for years to come. Not many activists considered Marxism, in the form of an exclusive concentration on the urban worker, a viable alternative. In fact, revolutionists in rural Russia looked on that extremely "orthodox" brand of European Marxism as opting out of the Russian movement altogether.

Reacting to the failures of the "going to the people," Sergei Kravchinsky moved briefly in a direction radically opposed to Plekhanov's. In his lead article for the first issue of *Zemlia i Volia* (*Land and Liberty*), in the fall of 1878, Kravchinsky wrote, "Five years ago we removed our German dress and fitted ourselves out in the simple blouse of the Russian peasant. Now we see that that was not enough; the time has come to remove the German dress from socialism as well and to fit it out in the simple blouse of the Russian peasant." Two months earlier Kravchinsky had stabbed and killed General Mezentsev in St. Petersburg. Now he hailed Vera Zasulich's attempt on the life of Governor General Trepov and the Chigirin peasant uprising, engineered by Stefanovich, as the dawn of a new era in the Russian revolution. This was the same Stefanovich who wrote of the instinctive communalism of the Russian folk on the pages of *Obshchina* but who resorted to fake tsarist manifestoes in order to rally the peasantry of the Chigirin District against the local gentry. Hundreds were arrested and many sent to Siberia when the undertaking was inevitably discovered. Thus Kravchinsky hailed assassination and hoodwinking conspiracy as the "turning points in the history of the Russian revolution."[57]

It is not clear whether terror and deception were precisely what Kravchinsky meant when he asked that socialism be clothed in the simple blouse of the Russian peasant. His position reflected all the confusion and turmoil of the day. He certainly did not mean that European socialism was of no rele-

56. *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 1926, no. 1 (14), pp. 163–64.

57. *Zemlia i Volia*, Oct. 25, 1878, no. 1, reprinted in *Revoliutsionnaia zhurnalistika 70-kh godov*, pp. 127–30.

vance to the Russian movement. One of his popular booklets written for the people, *Of Truth and Falsehood* (1875), called the First International the "greatest cause the world has ever seen." His lead article and other pieces in *Zemlia i Volia* agreed that socialist propaganda was still essential but that it must be supplemented by action; that Tkachev's brand of conspiracy was unacceptable; and that the Russian revolution should strive for an "agrarian" socialist order that would correspond to the socialization of all means of production called for in Western urban socialist programs. He presented *Zemlia i Volia* as a socialist journal following in the footsteps of the earlier journal, *Nachalo*.[58] Near the end of his life he boasted that "it was due very largely to [his] influence in his early life that the Russian radical propaganda developed out of the Anarchism of Bakunin in a general Socialistic direction."[59] Not even Kravchinsky himself would own up to the romantic and isolationist overtones of his dictate on German dress and Russian peasant blouses. And few activists of the day paid any attention to that aspect of his dictate.

In the last decade of the century, when the revolutionary movement revived from the stunning setback suffered after the assassination of Alexander II, no major parties or spokesmen failed to recognize the integral relation between what was at stake in Russia and what was at stake in Germany and throughout Europe. Looking back over the previous three decades of activism, Kropotkin wrote at the end of the century, "All movements in Russia are conceived under the influence of Western Europe and carry the imprint of the trends of thought prevailing in Europe. . . . Our movement of the 1870s and the present movement are the children of the International and of the Communes, of the European Bakunin and of the equally European Marxism."[60]

The leading ideologists of the seventies—Lavrov, Bakunin, and Kropotkin—showed Russia's relation to the universal cause. All three were members of different sections of the First International. No major journal failed to devote significant space to questions of international socialism. And the major revolutionary groups—the Russian Section, the Chaikovtsy, and, later, Land and Liberty, Chernyi Peredel, and the People's Will—similarly saw their cause as a variation on an international theme: socialist transformation of existing society. All five groups explicitly stated their ties with the European movement. With good reason, Russian activists concluded that the First International and the member socialist parties saw nothing utopian in either rural or urban communalization. It was not necessary to idealize the peasantry or to become a utopian in order to conceive a socialist revolution in a rural environment; at any rate, no more so than it was necessary to idealize the

58. Ibid., pp. 114–20; also see note 30.
59. Perris, *Russia in Revolution*, p. 244.
60. Kropotkin, *Memoirs*, p. 326.

proletariat in order to conceive an egalitarian, humane, socialist civilization in the bleak industrial world of Western Europe.

Common sense suggested to most Russian activists that they should not import ready-made patterns of thought or action. They understood that socialism would have to be altered here and there to Russian contours. But so long as they remained socialists, their chief concern was the vast alteration which international socialism required of Russia, rather than the other way around. Their ruling purpose was to bring Russia in line with their notion of the European-wide revolution, not to issue some sort of radically updated edition of Slavophilism. As the revolutionary movement matured, socialists came to a clearer understanding of Russian particularities. These particularities had little to do with native rural communalism or revolutionary socialist readiness. Adjusting socialist doctrine to Russian reality, activists were forced to recognize special obstacles and to temper their earlier ambitious hopes. They could be critical of Russian backwardness and keenly conscious of the disadvantage backwardness worked against their cause. But they persisted in their drive for the better future, prepared to take full advantage of every contingency and adapt themselves to every opportunity.

Revolutionists spoke of the revolutionary socialist potential of the homespun obshchina. They differed greatly among themselves, but almost all returned ultimately to an appraisal of the peasant and his commune which was first expressed by Chernyshevsky: "Even the worst things have their good side." Characteristically the peasant obshchina appeared in their ideology as an institution which might serve as a point of departure, as the rustic whole cloth out of which a socialist commune might be fabricated. It was, after all, about the only material offered by Russian conditions at that time. But the finished garment would not be measured and cut in the fashion of the simple peasant blouse. Russian revolutionists worked from an international socialist pattern.