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Chapter XIII

from

AN INTRODUCTION TO NINETEENTH-CENTURY
RUSSIAN SLAVOPHILISM. A STUDY IN IDEAS

Volume III

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by
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December 16, 1976

XIII

NAROD AND THE INDIVIDUAL

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Slavophiles stood for Orthodoxy free from government "protection" and for a freer church that would be more in accord with Khomiakov's doctrine of sobornost'. They also stood for the historical and actual, living peasant commune and placed great hopes in it for the future, and they firmly believed in the greatness and ability of the Russian people (narod) to show Russia the way to brilliant cultural and moral regeneration. Well-meaning though the Slavophiles were, as landlords in comfortable circumstances they had no real comprehension of the extreme economic plight of the peasant serfs who comprised the vast majority of the people. Among the Slavophiles none was more sanguine, more ardently hopeful of Russia's cultural and moral leadership in the world than Konstantin Aksakov, and none was further removed than he from the historical and existing reality of the narod that he so extolled.

While Sergei and Ivan Aksakov despaired that Konstantin would ever learn even the most elementary truths about everyday existence or would ever be financially self-supporting, he let his imagination and fantasy determine his views of the Russian serf and peasant. In his "comedy" Prince Lupovitsky, as Vengerov ironically remarks, "all his peasants are very well-off, and in a fit of magnanimity give eight hundred rubles of which the elder contributes one hundred" for the purpose of ransoming two recruits from military service.¹

¹S. A. Vengerov, K. S. Aksakov, p. 241; see also K. S. Aksakov, Kniaz' Lupovitsky ili priedz v derevniu (Moscow, 1856), pp. 81-82.

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Certainly in 1851 when Konstantin Askakov wrote Lupovitsky and for the next several years thereafter he seems not to have had any comprehension whatsoever of the horrors of serfdom. Vengerov was right in saying that a foreign observer guided by Konstantin's play and other similar pronouncements would have concluded that the mouzhik was really a pretty fortunate sort of fellow. In other words, Konstantin was himself the deluded one who drew from the spurious world of the Russian peasant and narod that he had created for himself far-reaching conclusions which in turn deeply infused his ideology and his Slavophilism.

In the course of the century many of Russia's greatest and noblest minds agonized over the fate and character of the Russian peasant and people, and some of the Slavophiles were among the most unrestrained in their hopes and expectations. Among them Konstantin Aksakov's version of the narod was the most extreme and the most idealized. Furthermore, he more than any of the other Slavophiles slanted it in a peculiar way, eventually arriving at a striking Slavophil distortion. Vengerov's contrast between the Westerners and the Slavophiles is particularly noteworthy for illuminating this point. He says that the "desire to explain that the bonded slave is also a human being and that therefore his suffering must be alleviated, that is the base upon which stands the love of people [narodoliubie] of the Belinsky school of writers." Among the members of this school he names Turgenev, Grigorovich, and Nekrasov, for whom the "mouzhik was close because they saw in him the human being, and the human being at that in need of sympathy and help." But for the Slavophiles and particularly for Konstantin Aksakov the "source of their love of the people came from a diametrically opposite direction," for Aksakov the "peasant was dear principally as the keeper of the 'truly Russian' traditions."²

²Vengerov, K. S. Aksakov, pp. 241-242.

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To these views must be added a third major view of the narod, perhaps less well publicized, but older, more prevalent, and more apparent than these, of which Konstantin was painfully, almost morbidly aware. This view he tried to expose and ridicule in Prince Lupovitsky. Here the Frenchified Russian aristocrat conceives the mouzhik as a sort of subhuman species and condescendingly attempts to bring the fruits of French culture to the Russian village.³ This attitude was expressed in the 1850's by the liberal bourgeois Westerner V. P. Botkin who in an argument with Nekrasov about literature ridiculed Nekrasov's wish to write for the illiterate Russian peasants. Nekrasov wanted to become a "Russian Béranger," he said, but "my dear, you have not taken into account that in France the people are civilized whereas our Russian [people] are Eskimos, Hottentots!" He was glad to be what he was: "Yes, I am a European, and not a Russian savage."⁴

³Like Konstantin's Liberation of Moscow this comedy has neither literary nor dramatic, artistic merit, and in this respect has been rewarded with the complete oblivion which it deserves. It does, however, have some value as an ideological and propaganda document. Its full title suggests its theme, Prince Lupovitsky or Arrival in the Village. The arrival from Paris of a Russian prince, the carrier of French culture, into a Russian village was long overdue. Lupovitsky is convinced that he could "graft [privit] European enlightenment" on the Russian narod however "savage" and "uneducated" it might be since it was badly in need of Western "sivilizatsiia." He is convinced of this in the Paris café, where the play opens, and even more when he arrives in the Russian village, "our people must be like us, Europeans." This is the refrain repeated throughout. Konstantin's own view was that the people were the ones who could teach the gentry, not vice versa. See K. S. Aksakov, Lupovitsky, pp. 13, 14, 15, 18, 29.

⁴See A. Ia. Golovacheva (Panaeva), "Vospominaniia," in Istoricheskii Vestnik, August, 1889, pp. 488-489; V. Z. Zavitnevich, Russkie Slavianofily i ikh znachenie v dele ucheniia idei narodnosti i samobytnosti (Kiev, 1915), pp. 26-27. As an illustration of how the socialists looked on the narod one could cite Chernyshevsky's. Speaking in the name of "our circle" in an open letter to Alexander II, and in spite of his compassion for the poor and downtrodden, he says: "We think that the people [narod] are ignorant, full of crude prejudices and blind hatred for everything that is not in accord with their savage customs. They do not distinguish between people who wear German dress. They will treat them all alike. They will have no mercy for our science, our poetry, our art. They will destroy our civilization." N. G. Chernyshevsky, Polnoe sobranie sochineniia (Moscow, 1951), X, 92.

Since the eighteenth century, this arrogance and cynicism brought out in a Russian gentry salon had been daily demonstrated to the Russian peasant in countless spoken and unspoken ways, for with the French influence had come new barriers between peasant and master. To the economic, social, administrative, and personal barriers were added Western dress, language, manners, education, and all too often superficial culture and polish, so that a household serf on the Iusupov or Sheremetev Moscow estates lived and worked not in the heart of Russia but in a small-scale, make-believe, artificial Versailles. One could scarcely argue with Konstantin Aksakov and his fellow Slavophiles that there was neither dignity nor self-respect nor true creativity in the Botkin brand of Westernism. Nor was there much that was edifying and worth preserving in the serf-sustained luxury and extravagance of the Iusupovs, Sheremetevs, and their like.

In this last category of Russians with a definite attitude toward the peasant and the narod Konstantin placed Gogol'. He did this on the basis of Gogol's Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends, the book that angered many of Gogol's friends and enemies alike. Konstantin's letter of May, 1848, was almost an itemization of his criticism and I have already referred to it in some detail in Chapters VII and XII. It was Gogol's "Letter to a Russian Landlord" (Russkii pomeschik), along with some remarks in the introduction to the second edition of Dead Souls of 1846, that drew Konstantin's attacks on the question of the narod. Specifically, he objected to the way in which the "landlord was placed above" the narod morally and ethically, so that the peasant, the "village wild man" and "unwashed mug" in Gogol's oblique language, was to be guided and instructed by the "upper" class, the "flower" of the Russian nation.⁵ This touched off the Scythian

⁵N. V. Gogol', Sochineniia, 17th ed., pp. 1219-1220.

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in Konstantin, to use an expression of the time: Gogol' deserved "great blame" for his "worship [poklonenie] of the public and contempt for the narod."⁶ No Russian could commit a worse sin than this. For Konstantin "public" stood for everything that was artificial, shallow, amoral if not immoral, and non-Russian; narod stood for the Russian peasantry, the supreme and the sublime. It was a contrast that he was to use again and again in his publicistic writings.

Although during the course of the nineteenth century practically every prominent member of the gentry, and later the intelligentsia, at one time or another took up the question of the narod and the principle of nationality (narodnost'), Konstantin Aksakov's position was unique in that he stood practically alone at one extreme of the range of opinions. Some of the other Slavophiles were close, but Aksakov's views went further. At the far range in the opposite direction was Botkin. N. A. Berdiaev is of a later period and directed his attacks mainly at contemporary subjects, but in the course of making them he had a lot to say about the Slavophiles as well. His scorn, unleashed on two occasions and briefly considered here, was triggered in the first instance by Andrei Belyi's rhythmical prose work Serebrianyi golub' (The Silver Dove), published in 1910, and in the second by the events of 1917 leading to the Bolshevik Revolution. From the title of Berdiaev's ten-page review of Belyi--"Russian Temptation" (Russkaia soblazn')--to its last paragraphs it is a sustained diatribe against the narod and Russian populism and the East-West dichotomy. Berdiaev thought that Belyi's novel led to the "problem of mystical populism" and that the "people [narod] in their mystical element are mighty, but dark, almost demoniac." Furthermore,

⁶Russkii Arkhiv, 1890, Book One, p. 154.

"The spirit of populism is ineradicably inherent in the Russians. There is no other nation in which there is such a cult of the people as among us, such thirst to receive the truth from the people, such thirst for union [slianie] with the people."⁷

Berdiaev classified Russian populism into five "forms" or categories, going from Slavophilism, to "populism" proper, then Tolstoyism, populism "even in Russian Marxism," and finally to the latest and most dangerous manifestation, the "mystical form." "According to Russian mystical populism," he said, "the people were above faith and truth; what was true was what the people believed in." The Slavophiles, like Dostoevsky and many others, were not completely free of this false worship of the people and their faith. He saw such worship in the Old Ritualists, in the "nationalization of the Orthodox church which weakened among us the sense of ecumenism," in Tolstoyism, "so characteristic of the Russians," and even in a special form in the "atheistic-populist camp." They all sought truth in the people and "put them above truth." Simply stated, "Populism is a chronic Russian disease," which has shown remarkable staying power and when "conquered and expelled in one form is immediately reborn in another. . . . [for] the craving to dissolve, to give oneself wholly to [something], is a purely Russian craving."⁸

In Andrei Belyi, Berdiaev thought, Russia had a writer who had "deeply penetrated the mystical element of the people." He himself had seen and appreciated the Orthodox church traits in the Russians and could agree with

⁷N. A. Berdiaev, Russkaia mysl', 1910, Book XI, p. 106. Similar thoughts and sentiments about the people (narod) as those in the following pages but toned down, were expressed by Berdiaev and some of the other contributors to the symposium Vekhi (Signposts) in 1909. See N. A. Berdiaev et al., Vekhi. Sbornik statei o russkoi intelligentsii (2nd ed., Moscow, 1909), pp. 2-3, 6-11, 16-17, 30, 59, 62-63, 86, 89, 143-144.

⁸Berdiaev, "Russkaia soblazn'," pp. 107-108.

Belyi that "there is a small corner [ugolok] in the soul of the Russian people in which lives a genuine, church, Christian truth, the enlightened small corner." But there was also much paganism in the Russian Orthodox — order, and "idolatry before the people as idolatry before any natural element is a lie and a sin." So also "Mystical populism is a frightful lie and a frightful temptation." Belyi, who was an "elemental [stikhiinyi] populist and an elemental nationalist," was also guilty of "much mystical Slavophilism--troubled, disturbed, catastrophic Slavophilism, connected with Gogol' and Dostoevsky."⁹

This was Berdiaev's relatively moderate, restrained view of Slavophilism, the narod, and populism, but between 1910 and 1918 as momentous events and changes took place in Russia and the West his views and mood changed. He feared and disliked the Bolshevik movement, and in the second article referred to, of 1918, he charged the intelligentsia and the populists, with their glorification of the narod, with responsibility for it. Whether factually and historically he was justified in seeing the coming revolution in the light in which he did, and whether it was in fact what he said it was raises questions far beyond the scope of this study. The pertinent part here is that which refers to his evaluation of Slavophilism, populism, and the narod as an example and an illustration of the opposite extreme of Konstantin Aksakov's position.

The burden of Berdiaev's attack in the 1918 article was indeed much less against Bolshevism (according to a footnote to the title of the article, it was written before the Bolshevik Revolution) as against the nineteenth century and some of Russia's greatest minds, together with the

⁹Ibid., pp. 109-111.

Slavophiles, all of whom he considered the perpetrators of cowardice and deception against the Russian nation. He did not mince words: "Russian faith in the 'narod' was idolatry, the worship of man and humanity, the creation of an idol from the external masses of people. . . . Faith in the people always [bespoke] the pusillanimity and helplessness of Russian thinking men afraid to take on the responsibility and to decide for themselves where truth and justice lay."¹⁰ He accused Gogol' and Dostoevsky and all the Russian intelligentsia of grave weakness and faintheartedness, for in reality the intelligentsia "was always feminine." Only in Khomiakov, as he had pointed out earlier, was the "manly Logos too strong" for the otherwise "feminine" Russian intelligentsia:¹¹

From the loftiest realm of thought and spiritual life the most remarkable Russian men precipitously descended and sought the highest wisdom in the penetration of the life of the people. For them this was religious wisdom. I. Kireevsky proposed reverence for the holiness of an icon because the people prayed before this icon and sanctified it with their genuflections and kissing. For others this was social wisdom, the truth of the life of labor, the truth of life close to nature. But all of them were afraid of their high cultural life, as untruth, as a falling away from the natural, good world order. L. Tolstoy was the most extreme in expressing this Russian populism. In his person were combined religious and social populism.¹²

¹⁰N. A. Berdiaev, "Idei i zhizn'. Vlast' i psikhologiya intelligentsii," Russkaia mysl', 1918, Books I-II, pp. 102-103.

¹¹Berdiaev, Russkaia mysl', 1910, Book XI, pp. 107-112.

¹²Ibid., 1918, Books I-II, p. 102.

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Just as the Slavophiles, Konstantin Aksakov in particular, and others among the gentry reserved some of their most mordant criticism for members of their own class so Berdiaev, also paradoxically, saved some of his most biting words for the intelligentsia to which he himself belonged:

Berdiaev

The religion of the narod is in truth the religion of nonexistence [nebytie], the religion of a dark, all-swallowing, all-devouring chasm. . . . Populist ideology is a pure product of the intelligentsia. It is an expression of its alienation from the narod and the antithesis to narod. For the narod itself populism is impossible. The best people from the narod, from the lowest working layer, strove for light, for knowledge, for culture, for a way out of the people's darkness. They never idealized the narod and did not worship it.¹³

Reacting with furious indignation to the threatening Bolshevik revolution he asked, "But what has this narod shown itself to have--this narod so believed in by the Russian Slavophiles and the revolutionary populists, by Kireevsky, Herzen, Dostoevsky, and the men of the seventies, 'going to the people'?" He had a ready answer:

*of
Gorky*

This narod displayed primitive savagery, darkness, hooliganism, thirst, the instincts of slaughter^{er}s [pogromshchikov], the psychology of revolting slaves; it showed the snout of a wild beast. . . . The vast and dark kingdom of the mouzhik swallows and devours all blessings and values. In it is drowned every image of man. . . . The immense dark kingdom of the mouzhik must travel the long road of the civilizing process of

¹³Ibid., p. 103.

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education and enlightenment, [for] the Dionysian orgies of the dark kingdom of the mouzhik threaten to transform Russia with all its values and blessings into nonexistence.¹⁴

As in the polemics of the eighteen forties and fifties so in the case of Berdiaev's polemics one extreme ("one-sidedness") begets another, both equally removed from reality and probably from the truth. For certainly between the saintlike mouzhik of Konstantin Aksakov, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, and the demonlike mouzhik of Berdiaev there were millions of living and breathing Russian peasants. Exploited and brutalized for centuries, the peasant classes lacked the strength to rise above the harsh and oppressive conditions of their environment. And yet there were some individuals who managed to struggle out of the bog. The potential for great cultural, artistic, and scientific creativity was there, within the Russian nation. And by the end of the Slaophil period, despite the miserable conditions, the potential was strikingly being realized in a number of ways, particularly

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 104-105. Berdiaev further showed his "one-sidedness" by his preference for certain nineteenth-century intellectuals and ideologies. The less one thought of the Russian peasant the higher Berdiaev ranked him: "Among the Russian thinkers the most correct was Chaadaev. Solov'ev was also right in much for he was free of populist illusions. Gogol' saw in Russia the snout of the wild beast but then repented. Today Gogol's snouts are triumphant. Slavophilism has already been killed in all its varieties and forms. Its faith in Holy Rus' today sounds as an insufferable falsehood and lies. . . . All of Dostoevsky's positive ideas about the Russian people have proved to be an illusion. Today they sound false. L. Tolstoy has to be recognized as the greatest Russian nihilist, the destroyer of all values and sacredness, the annihilator of culture. Tolstoy has triumphed and so has his anarchism, his idea of nonresistance, his denial of state and culture, his moralistic demand of equality in poverty, in nonexistence, and his submission to the kingdom of the mouzhik and physical labor. . . . [But finally] Tolstoyism's godless nihilism has been unmasked along with its frightful poison that is destroying the Russian soul." Celebrating the demise of the Russian intelligentsia, perhaps a bit indiscriminately and prematurely, Berdiaev announced, "as the line deriving from Kireevsky so also the line deriving from Herzen" has come to an end. "Slavophilism, populism, Tolstoyism, Russian religious conceit, and Russian revolutionary conceit, all are finished, they have been tragically outlived." Ibid., pp. 105, 106.

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in literature. Like all other nations, the Russians also had the potential for great moral and ethical achievements, and what it most needed was not to be extolled as angelic or condemned as satanic but given the opportunity to realize the best within it. As in all men and all societies the potential for good and for evil seems equally present, and no one went deeper in the exploration of human ambivalence than Dostoevsky. The eternal human dilemma still remains, how to bring out the good and inhibit the evil? The polemic, whether one holds the Aksakov or the Berdiaev view, is barren and wasteful as it bypasses the vast majority of the Russian people, and therefore could not have advanced the cause of the living, breathing Russian peasant. It did, however, serve to show the wide range of nineteenth and early twentieth century views and opinions of the Russian peasant and people.

Reflecting upon the extreme and heavily theoretical views of Konstantin Aksakov on the Russian people, one begins to see that the key to his attitude lies in the interrelationship between the Russian peasant and the peasant commune. But it is often difficult to see a clear priority. Was the Russian peasant noble because he had from early times been blessed with the presumed proto-Christian peasant commune or was the commune fortunate to have as its members the virtuous, and at times it seemed to Aksakov saintlike Russian peasant? The first alternative is given the greater weight in Konstantin's thought, and his Slavophil Orthodoxy at times emerges as the somewhat questionable bedrock of his ideology. To him the commune was not merely a human embodiment of the essence of Christian living; it was also Russia's basic and indispensable social and political institution. In other words Russia at its noblest and truest was not an empire and not a state but a "great commune" consisting of a multitude of village communes.

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Konstantin Aksakov was not well acquainted with contemporary Western political theory; he was probably not even familiar with the concepts of the state of nature and natural law although Kireevsky, among the Slavophiles, definitely was. Certainly they did not have a place in his political, ethical, and economic considerations. He seems in his writings almost totally unaware of natural law and the state of nature concept which from the latter third of the eighteenth century had passed beyond theory and ideology to the point of becoming embodied in The Rights of Man, the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution and finding expression in various ideological and programmatic principles in the nineteenth century, reaching a high point in Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum in 1891. Nor does he seem to have been aware of the social contract concept with which his younger friend Samarin was familiar.¹⁵ It is a safe assumption that neither the state of nature and natural law concepts nor the social contract theory, both products of Western rationalism and secularism, would have been acceptable to Konstantin any more than Western rationalism, secularism, and legalism were acceptable to Khomiakov and Kireevsky. But Slavophil political thought did not suffer from this malady, not in their eyes.

¹⁵The Slavophiles have often and glibly been reproached by both the Westerners and Western students of Russian affairs of having been "impractical," "utopian," and "reactionary" because they advocated a return to what they believed to be ancient principles such as communality and sobornost. But were they any more impractical, utopian, and reactionary than those who believed in the concepts of state of nature and natural law? First one has to decide what state of nature, that of Hobbes's brutal savage or of Rousseau's "virtuous and noble savage," and if the Slavophiles were reactionary for having gone into the dim historical past for inspirational principles how much more reactionary were the state of nature advocates harking back to a highly hypothetical order which might have existed somewhere in anthropological times? In fact Slavophil theorizing, like much of their contemporary Western theorizing, was bent on improvement of existing conditions. With all the Slavophil limitations of self-interest and class, the Slavophiles realized as was true of ideologists and philosophers since the days of Plato, that a degree of utopianism, i.e., the existence of an ideal, outside and above any and all individuals, however unattainable, was absolutely essential to the functioning of any polity, if it is not to degenerate into a human jungle.

The primeval social consciousness and common ownership of property in the "state of nature," which Rousseau extolled and to which some in the West thought a return was possible, Konstantin saw in what he thought to be the communal and Christian consciousness and organization of ancient Russia. Not only was this markedly different from Western secular and materialistic socialist concepts, but in terms of time Konstantin was referring to a relatively recent period, the coming of Christianity to Russia, whereas the more nebulous state of nature concept implies more distant, prehistorical times or cultures in a very early stage of social-political evolution before the dawn of civilization. For Konstantin, who was more politically conscious though often no more realistic or practical than the two founders of Moscow Slavophilism, Russian and to a lesser extent Slav communal consciousness and organization had far-reaching political, social, and economic as well as religious and even psychological meaning and potential.

In May, 1843, the Prussian specialist on agrarian affairs Baron August von Haxthausen arrived in Moscow from St. Petersburg for ten days from where he left on a tour of study of rural Russia. He returned to Moscow on October 29 for a longer stay. Even before his first stop in Moscow Haxthausen had heard of the Slavophiles and "wished very much to meet Khomiakov and Peter Kireevsky." During his two visits in the old capital he was well received by Pogodin, who at first looked at him with suspicion, and in the Moscow salons.¹⁶ Several years later Haxthausen recalled the "most hospitable and benevolent reception" in Moscow he had received once a certain initial coolness had been overcome. There, he said, he met "Messrs. Melgunov, Koshelev, Sverbeev, Chaadaev, Kireev, Kireevsky, the poet Khomiakov, and others. I came into closest contact,

¹⁶N. P. Barsukov, Pogodin, VII, 281-284.

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however, with Mr. Aksakov, one of the most brilliant men whose acquaintance I made in Russia."¹⁷ Exactly when and where he and Konstantin met is not clear. But if Herzen's memory can be trusted we are certain of at least one subject that they discussed. His page-long diary entry for May 13, 1843, describes a conversation with Haxthausen. He was struck, he says, by the visitor's "clear view about the order [byt] of our peasants, about landlord authority, local police, and administration in general. He found an important element, preserved from deep antiquity, our communality [obshchinnost']. It is necessary to develop it according to the demands of the time, etc."¹⁸

In chapter 30 of My Past and Thoughts (1855) Herzen elaborates upon the meeting between Haxthausen and Konstantin Aksakov. Konstantin, he recalls, "at the beginning of the forties preached the peasant commune, mir, and artel". He taught Haxthausen to understand them."¹⁹ This passage has generally been taken as establishing the beginning of Konstantin's interest in the peasant commune and the interpretation is plausible, but it is not certain whether he actually studied this question himself or relied on the work of the

¹⁷E. L. M. Schmidt, tr., S. F. Starr, ed., August von Haxthausen, Studies on the Interior of Russia (Chicago, 1972), p. 226. See also S. F. Starr, "August von Haxthausen and Russia," Slavonic and East European Review, July, 1968, pp. 462-478.

¹⁸Alexander Herzen, Sochineniia, II, 281-282. One idea that may well have been discussed was the Saint-Simon doctrine of abandoning private ownership in favor of the "right of use of land for one's lifetime." Haxthausen takes this up in chapter 3 of his Studies and concludes that "in Russia this system actually exists." But Haxthausen, like the Slavophiles, failed to stress that in Russia at the time communal landownership existed for the peasants in the commune and the mir, not for the landlords. See Haxthausen, Studies, p. 92.

¹⁹Herzen, Sochineniia, IX, 163. See also Vengerov, K. S. Aksakov, p. 78, and also his Aksakov, pp. 214-215; A. K. Borozdin, Literaturnyia Kharakteristiki Deviatnadsatyi vek (St. Petersburg, 1905), II, issue I, 186.

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other Slavophiles.²⁰ Though the mir and the commune as historical phenomena, as existing institutions, and as embryos for a future Russian socialist order were being discussed by the Slavophiles from the late 1830's on, the polemics with the Westerners on this subject in the public press did not start until after the final break between the two camps in the mid-forties. Haxthausen's interest in the Russian peasant communal order following his six-month tour of Russia added considerable prestige and weight to the Slavophile thesis, and the publication of his three-volume Studien from 1847 to 1852 in Germany helped to publicize some of the Slavophile views abroad.

In the journalistic exchanges between the Slavophiles and the Westerners the issues resolved into one main argument, that is, the merits of the clan theory of ancient Russian society versus those of the communal theory. Kavelin's "View of the Juridical Order [byt] in Ancient Russia," published in 1847, upheld the clan theory. Samarin immediately responded with an article supporting the communal theory. Konstantin Aksakov, who up to then had been concentrating his attention on linguistics and philology in his dissertation on Lomonosov, was ready enough to enter the fray but for the time being remained silent. The end of the forties marked the beginning of the period of heavy censorship, particularly onerous for the Slavophiles during the last seven years of Nicholas I's reign. Whether or not this is sufficient to explain Konstantin's public silence on the question of the commune at the turn of the forties, it must have been a contributing reason; it will be remembered that both Sergei and Konstantin Aksakov were under government ban with respect to their "Russian" dress and beards, and both Ivan Aksakov and Iurii Samarin were briefly detained by the

²⁰Without going into Russia's distant past I have given this matter some attention, including a rudimentary assessment of Haxthausen's role in the "discovery" of the commune. See Xomjakov, p. 179n., 207, 208n., 210, 231; The Third Heart, pp. 79-86; Kireevskij, pp. 82, 203, 211.

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Third Section. In any case neither of Konstantin's two plays of that period, though they both concentrate on the Russian peasant and narod, deals in any special way with the communal order. Given Konstantin's well-attested penchant for pro-commune propaganda this omission does not seem accidental. When he ventured into print, in the Slavophil symposium of 1852, his strong opinions on the commune-clan question not only contributed to the banning of all further issues of the symposium but unwittingly provided the Moscow censorship committee with the opportunity to reproach him for his study of the alleged "nonexistent communal order in Russia."²¹

Reduced to its bare essentials, the question was whether or not the ancient Russian Slav was an ethically highly advanced, noble, socially conscious being with a deep predisposition for Christian living and morality. In the literature of the period this was presented as the argument whether Russia's ancient order was based on the clan (rod), blood principle and relationship or on the social, communal. Samarin's written polemics with Kavelin represented only one stage of the battle. It engaged at one time or another the early Slavophiles, particularly Samarin, Khomiakov, and Konstantin Aksakov, and such moderate, academic, liberal Westerners as Kavelin, Sergei Solov'ev, in the fifties, Boris Chicherin, and at different times several others. After Herzen's departure for France at the end of 1847 and Belinsky's death less than a year later, and the emergence of a younger generation of radical Westerners in the second half of the fifties, principally Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov, the main opposition to the Slavophiles came from the camp of the liberal Westerners.

²¹Quoted in Vengerov, Aksakov, p. 212; also K. S. Aksakov, pp. 57-58. At the same time (1852) the Minister of Education, Prince P. A. Shirinsky-Shikhmatov, recommended Konstantin's essay to the "attention of the censorship" for the "novelty of its point of view" as well as for "spreading democratic orientation of public opinion in foreign countries against which we must shield ourselves by all possible means." Barsukov, Pogodin, XII, 118.

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7 Konstantin Aksakov firmly believed, and his belief was in general shared by the other Slavophiles, that the dominant social organization among the early Russians was the commune, not the clan, blood-tie order as believed in by the Westerners. For all the Slavophiles this issue was not of mere academic interest. They drew conclusions from it not only about the distant past but also about existing conditions, and particularly about the future social order of Russia. At the time when industrialism with its worldwide ramifications was rapidly transforming the social, economic, and political life of the West, when the problem of the age-old institution of serfdom was the all-important issue in Russia, the immediate course of Russian social, political, and economic life was clearly an urgent practical problem. If Konstantin could show that Russia's ancient order was different and qualitatively superior to the Western, that Russia had followed its own typical historical path (nobler and more desirable than the Western), the task of advocating a different indigenous course in the future would be easier and would enhance the prospects of success. Bearing this in mind it is not difficult to see through his passionate attachments and highly subjective interpretations of early Russian culture and through his fanciful, unhistorical rationalization, a hardheaded propagandistic zeal which he put to use in his recommendations to Alexander II and in his short publicistic works in Molva. His boundless faith in the Russian peasant of the past and present was being consciously and incessantly projected into Russia's future order.

For reasons of his own, among his various challengers Konstantin singled out Solov'ev and the University of Dorpat professor J. P. G. Ewers. He also referred to Professor N. V. Kalachev and to one or two others. It is not the purpose here to deal with the debate that Ewers touched off, particularly from the 1840's on for the rest of the century with his clan theory of early

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Russian society.²² It is rather to single out a few developments that bear directly on Konstantin's position, essentially the Slavophil position, and to focus on what, though perhaps appearing on the surface to be an esoteric academic controversy, was in truth a fundamental disagreement.²³ For in the Slavophil scheme of things the principle of communality was next to that of Orthodox sobornost' and the age-old and still living peasant commune, the noblest secular creation of the Russian Slavic spirit, whereas for the so-called "juridical" or "historical-juridical" school of the opponents of Slavophilism, the clan theory was the keystone of Russian social organization and of their scheme of historical interpretation.

With such fundamental issues at stake what might under ordinary circumstances have been a scholarly debate among academic historians and social studies specialists turned into a prolonged and often bitter ideological polemic. In this Konstantin Aksakov played his role to the full and was by no means the loser. For the student of the period, however, both sides

²²In 1826 Ewers published what is generally considered his major work, Das älteste Recht der Russen in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung (Dorpat, 1826). For a recent summary discussion see V. E. Illeritsky and I. A. Kudriavtsev, eds., Istoriografiia istorii SSSR. . . (Moscow, 1961), pp. 158-164. See also L. V. Cherepnin, "S. M. Solov'ev kak istorik," in L. V. Cherepnin et al., eds., S. M. Solov'ev. Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen (Moscow, 1959), Vols. 1-2, Book I, pp. 9, 11; A. G. Mazour, Modern Russian Historiography (New York, 1959), 2nd ed., p. 99.

²³For two succinct and clear expositions on the clan theory see P. N. Miliukov, "Iuridcheskaia shkola v russkoi istoriografii. (Solov'ev, Kavelin, Chicherin, Sergeevich)," Russkaia mysl', June, 1886, pp. 80-92; A. E. Presniakov, "S. M. Solov'ev v ego vliianii na razvitie russkoi istoriografii," in S. N. Valk et al., eds., Voprosy istoriografii i istochnikovedeniia istorii SSSR (Moscow-Leningrad, 1963), pp. 76-86. Presniakov's article was delivered as a public lecture in 1920. With respect to the Slavophil attitude this is better focused than Miliukov's and includes, on the question of the "historical-juridical" school, in addition to those in Miliukov, T. N. Granovsky, F. I. Leontovich, I. E. Zabelin, and Solov'ev's most illustrious student, V. O. Kliuchevsky. There are also pertinent observations in regard to K. S. Aksakov's position.

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created problems and complications, inherent in all polemics, which render difficult the separation of the factual and believable from the tactical and strategic thus constantly sidetracking the student into the poorly illuminated recesses of human motivation.

When at the end of the forties Konstantin gave his attention to Russian history and its characteristic spirit, institutions, and essence, he had already done a good deal of thinking and reflecting on these matters. The results put on paper were three fragments for a total of twenty-four printed pages: "On the Basic Principles of Russian History," the second, "On the Same," and the last, "About Russian History."²⁴ Brief as they are, they are nonetheless valuable, for altogether they contain in summary, sometimes in epigrammatic form, many of Konstantin's most characteristic and best known Slavophil concepts. Reference to some has already been made. To others we shall yet have to return, but for the present the focus is on the communal principle and the choir.

At the beginning of the first fragment Konstantin, in reference to early Slav social, public life equated two of his most characteristic concepts, and in the process clarified some of his terminology. The "commune," he states, as organized among the early Slavs "bears the simple name of land [zemlia]." And indeed his use of the term zemlia is often synonymous with the common Russian people, the peasantry, and in this case also with the commune, which historically as well as in his day was a village, peasant institution. A page or two later he speaks of the "commune of the land" (obshchina zemskaiia), thus designating the common people of Russia who, in reference to the coming of Rurik to Kiev, "did not elect, but summoned the prince to them." He begins the third fragment with the assertion that "Russia

²⁴K. S. Aksakov, Sochineniia, I, 1-24.

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is a land [zemlia] entirely original [samobytnaia], not at all similar to the European states and countries." He elaborates on this theme but the emphasis in the use of the term "land" is not on its physical features and geography but on the people of the land, the narod or the peasantry. He makes this explicit by stating that the two words "which express people [narod], and authority, i.e., Land [Zemlia] and State," are two distinct concepts, giving him strong preference to the first.

There is a profound dichotomy in Konstantin Aksakov's thought on the key subject of "Land or people" (Zemlia ili narod) on the one hand, and state or government (gosudarstvo), and the head of the state, the gosudar' on the other. To this problem, and the relationship between the "land" and the state, we shall have to return. Here, a further clarification of Konstantin's meaning of the common Russian people and their relationship to communal Christian principles is essential in formulating the basis of his ideology. "Land, as this word states, Konstantin says in the third fragment, refers to the "indeterminate and peaceful state of the people."²⁵ For him the common Russian people, the peaceful peasantry, were inseparable from the commune, which in turn was the embodiment of the essence of Christianity. The confluence of several kindred concepts into the principal, irreducible starting point or perhaps more accurately the branching out of kindred concepts from their ultimate source, Christianity, is summed up in Konstantin's "About Contemporary Man," familiar from earlier references. In this he declared the "communal principle, the divine principle," and took great satisfaction in the belief that the "People that understood the lofty meaning of the commune and took it as a principle were the Slavic people, primarily the Russian people who created the mir for themselves even before the coming of Christianity."²⁶

²⁵Ibid., pp. 3, 5, 7, 10, 13.

²⁶K. S. Aksakov, "Contemporary Man," p. 259.

It is perhaps understandable why Konstantin was determined to oppose all those who disregarded the communal principle and organization in early Russian society and insisted on the prevalence of the clan principle and organization. In 1850 he published a short article in the Moscow Gazette entitled "Was the 'Izgoi' a Clan or a Social Phenomenon?" The article was a reply to an article in which the author maintained that the izgoi--meaning the déclassé or the "displaced social elements in Kievan society--were an outgrowth of clan society. Konstantin accepted the izgoi or izgon as a traditional part of society in Russia, but he disagreed with the assumption that Kievan society was based on the clan and wrote his article to show that the izgoi must have come out of the commune because that, not the clan, was the standard institution in Kievan Russia. By the time the term izgoi appeared, he concludes, the Kievan Slavs already had a well-established "communal, civic order," and therefore izgoi had a "social, civic" not clan meaning. An izgoi was a "person who was expelled or expelled himself from the commune or estate."²⁷

Although Konstantin seldom went out of his way to document his position on an issue, even he realized that in this instance mere defense would hardly begin to satisfy the lukewarm, and certainly not his opponents, and that a strong refutation of the clan theory was in order. The result was his ninety-page essay-monograph on the ancient Russian social order.²⁸ By his

²⁷K. S. Aksakov, Sochineniia, I, 38.

²⁸The full title is "On the Ancient Order Among the Slavs in General and the Russian in Particular. Apropos of Opinions on the Clan Social Order." This long essay was first published in the Slavophil symposium Moskovskii sbornik in 1852, edited by Ivan Aksakov, and it was printed in the same year as a separate pamphlet. It was also included in K. S. Aksakov's Complete Collected Works (Moscow, 1861), I, 59-124. All references here are to the pamphlet edition cited, Aksakov, On the Ancient Order.

standards and definition of scholarship, he came as close to historical research in this long, rambling essay as he was ever to come.

He begins by attempting to define historical scholarship, using the term nauka. Since nauka also means science, as in the mathematical, laboratory approach to physics and chemistry, he unwittingly caused some confusion. "Scholarship [nauka]," he says, "is nothing other than consciousness of the subject, knowledge of its laws [deriving] from the subject itself." To this narrow definition he added, "Meanwhile scholarship [nauka] is often understood as a collection of rules decreed beforehand and applicable to the subject." Thus "Russian phenomena" were often subjected to the "tyranny of science in this latter meaning," and this category of phenomena included Russian "history, poetry, and language."

These sentiments were specifically directed against four eminent German scholars, G. S. Bayer, G. F. Müller, A. L. Schlözer, and J. P. G. Ewers, who pioneered in historical studies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. None of them, Konstantin says, "belonged to the narod, had living bonds with it," and yet they "undertook to explain its life." Worse still, some Russians who "accepted the foreign point of view also looked in an un-Russian way [ne po-russki] on their own history and on everything that was their own." He placed in this category Karamzin and others, and even to a certain extent Lomonosov. Konstantin's bias and motives are sufficiently apparent not to need any further elaboration. Much more valid, advanced for its time, and free of nationalistic prejudice was another of his observations--that the simple political approach to history, or as he said mere concern with "princes, wars, diplomatic negotiations, and laws," does not exhaust the life of a nation. This was the approach of Schlözer and

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Karamzin, and it was too narrow. The time had come for historians to turn also to national characteristics, to "social, civic, and internal reasons of its life."²⁹

Following this brief introduction we come once again to the familiar defense of family, communal, social, and civic life in ancient Russia and the argument that these, not the blood-tie, clan-ordered patriarchal system, formed the basis of the Kievan social order. These arguments are interspersed with the other familiar theme of Orthodox Christianity, standing above the commune, sanctifying and ennobling it in complete as it were preordained harmony and mutual compatibility. Konstantin does not merely argue that the communal system was the more dominant in early Russia; he does not deny that the clan order existed in any form among the early Russian Slavs but it left no marks in the face of the overpowering commune. It is true, he says, that there was a clan order in some early societies--among the ancient Romans, the Germans, and particularly the Scots, "where it even now has not completely disappeared," and he also finds it among the nomadic Kirghiz tribes and the Bukeevska horde. He accepts, too, Kavelin's contention that the "principle of blood kinship" existed in Roman and Chinese societies."³⁰ But he totally disagrees with Karamzin's assertion that Russian society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was based on the same principle.

In answering his own question, "Did the clan order exist among the Slavs?" Konstantin relies primarily on the well-known sixth-century Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea, not directly but through Šafařík's classic Slavic Antiquities, which Solov'ev had also used.³¹ The evidence that Konstantin

²⁹K. S. Aksakov, On the Ancient Order, pp. 3-4.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 18, 30.

³¹P. J. Šafařík, Slowanské Starožitnosti (Prague, 1837), pp. 965, 966, 968-970.

found indirectly in Procopius is circumstantial, incomplete, fragmentary, and therefore inconclusive, but he staked much on it as others before and after him have done. Procopius looms large and extremely important because hard, factual, authenticated information about the life of the early Slavs is extremely scarce, and because of Procopius' considerable, though not necessarily untarnished, reputation. Procopius, in Konstantin's words, tells us that the "Slavs do not submit to a single man," that they live under the "People's administration" (narodnoe pravlenie), and that "this witness speaks clearly against a clan order, for such a democratic arrangement contradicts such an order." Furthermore, Konstantin says, Procopius tells us that the "Slavs had the custom of consulting together about all matters. Again witness clearly pointing to a people's or communal organization." The Slavophiles, Konstantin Aksakov in particular, made much of this consultative principle, expressed as a skhodka, a meeting or assembly.

Somewhat offhandedly, as if no further evidence were really necessary, Konstantin also cites the late sixth-century emperor Mauricius (also by way of Šafařík) and one or two Western medieval sources in support of his thesis upholding the communal principle. Summing up his case--as opposed to the clan theory of Ewers et al.--at a mid-point, he says, "In front of us emerges in the most remote times communal organization, the familiar assembly [skhodka], and the familiar unanimity [edinoglasie]." ³²

The next step was to demonstrate the existence of the communal principle and organization among some of the Western and South Slavs. For the early Czech Slavs Aksakov chose one of the oldest Czech and Slav written documents, the song known as the Trial of Liubosha (Sud Liubosha), in one hundred twenty-one verses. (Here again he relied heavily on the scholarship and authority of Šafařík's *Slavic Antiquities*.) The question was whether the

³²Aksakov, On the Ancient Order, pp. 31-35.

inheritance of two brothers should be equally divided or held in common. It is not necessary to follow the argument between Soloy'ev and Konstantin Aksakov in detail. Konstantin's conclusion was that despite German influence, the system of primogeniture, "so abhorrent to the Slav," did not triumph, and that this song is testimony to the "family and social-civic [obschestvennyi] Slav order." He further attempts to distinguish between family and clan in the early Polish social system; his point is that among the Poles as among the early Russians the "Family . . . could contract or expand according to the wishes and whim of its members, constantly resting on its narrow family base alone." In other words, though it might sometimes appear to be a clan it would not be a clan, since, he was at pains to make clear, whenever the clan appeared it was as an imposed governmental system and not as an organic phenomenon. To the question what was the Slav family, his answer was that in social-civic and economic matters such as land ownership, since the "whole commune had the right to land," the family "itself became a commune." As for "popular consultation, the veche, it again became a commune and it sent its representative or the elder, elected by it as in the Trial of Liubosha."³³

This led Konstantin to a strong affirmation of one of Slavophilism's most fundamental principles, that of the family. It is evident that he considered the communal and family principles thoroughly compatible and inseparable. "The sense of family, and the family order, were strong in the Slav nations, are strong now, and will be strong in the future so long as they do not lose their nationality." He sees the "family commune" as a "sacred and moral" concept without "any calculation," and concludes that "among the Slavs there was no clan order, but that what stands out definitely

³³Ibid., pp. 42, 45, 48.

are family and commune." After a brief digression on the early communal order among the Montenegrines and Serbs he returns to Kievan Russia, specifically to the Chronicle of Nestor, cautioning that although the word clan (rod) had a basic meaning it also assumed many different shades in actual use, and that therefore it should be interpreted with great care. His conclusion was that rod should be interpreted as "family" not clan as in Ewers and his followers.

In the well-known old code of laws, "Russian Justice" (Ruskaia Pravda) Konstantin found further confirmation of his position, contending that it "clearly points to the family and refutes the clan order," and he offers fragmentary philological evidence: "The Russian people," he says, "so richly furnished with words about all family relations . . . have no words for grand uncle or petit neveu. Here, as is apparent, for them ended the limits of kinship."³⁴

The concluding part of the essay dwells again on the Kievan period, and we are given some additional bits of evidence for the communal thesis from the eleventh and twelfth centuries such as the treaties with Byzantium. In Oleg's treaty with Constantinople and "even more apparent in Igor's, the communal order is fully expressed." In the reign of Iziaslav I "was heard the loud voice of the commune in Kiev," and in 1067 when Iziaslav and Vsevolod, crushed by the Polovetsians, fled to Kiev the Kievans convoked the veche on the square." Other examples of functioning veches in Kiev and in other parts of Russia follow, but perhaps the best known of them all, the veche of Novgorod, is merely mentioned since, he explains, it is self-evident: "no one doubted . . . the communal organization of Novgorod." In the last two pages of the essay he restates his main theme and finally concludes with a reaffirmation: "In ancient Russia there existed a social-civic order that was

³⁴Ibid., pp. 50, 51, 56-57, 60, 66, 71.

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a communal structure, a communal order. Here there was no room for a clan order. . . . The Russian land was from the beginning the least patriarchal, the most familial, and the most social-civic, that is, the most communal land."³⁵

In the course of the clan-commune controversy, which lasted more or less throughout the 1850's, Konstantin Aksakov's early friendly relations with S. M. Solov'ev deteriorated as they became the unyielding proponents of two opposing points of view.³⁶ Solov'ev, an ardent Slavophil in his student days, was an avowed Westerner in the 1840's but he still mingled in Slavophil circles and was assumed by many, including the government, to be one of them.³⁷ Certainly the Slavophiles would have been happy to have had him in their camp. But as the clan-commune controversy grew hotter, such a possibility became out of the question. Between Solov'ev and Konstantin Aksakov, who were essentially incompatible, the quarrel at last reached a bitter stage when Konstantin reviewed several volumes of Solov'ev's multivolume history of Russia. Some of this quarrel was described in Chapter VIII, and in Chapter XIV I shall deal with particulars of the history episode.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 76, 82, 91.

³⁶Solov'ev, in contrast to Konstantin Aksakov, was extraordinarily industrious and efficient. In Kliuchevsky's words, in three years (1845-1848) he prepared for "two examinations and two dissertations with four disputes not counting the first course in Russian history which he read at Moscow University during the academic year 1845-1846." Kliuchevsky stresses that during these early years Solov'ev formed the views that he held for the rest of his career. This was also the period during which he was in close contact with the Slavophiles and formed his views on the clan theory of early Russian society. V. O. Kliuchevsky, Sochineniia v vos'mi tomakh (Moscow, 1959), VII, 128.

³⁷The government thought of denying Solov'ev his teaching position because it suspected him of Slavophil convictions. See K. N. Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Sergei Mikhailovich Solov'ev," in Biografii i Kharakteristiki (St. Petersburg, 1882), p. 261; P. K. Christoff, Xomjakov, p. 104n.

To those accustomed to the long-standing Westerner point of view of the Moscow Slavophiles the evaluations of some of the most reputable Russian historians who incline toward Konstantin's rather than Solov'ev's side will probably come as a surprise. All the more so since none of the historians quoted below were pro-Slavophile in sentiment and ideological orientation. V. O. Kliuchevsky was a loyal, grateful, and devoted student of Solov'ev's at the University of Moscow. In his obituary of Solov'ev, first published in 1880, Kliuchevsky calls attention to one of his teacher's most enduring and guiding convictions, that is, that during the Kievan period the long-existing Russian "clan relations began to crumble," and the emergence of rival princes eventually helped the strongest of them to subdue the rest. "In this manner appeared the prince of Moscow. . . . Thus was accomplished the transition from clan relations between the princes to state relations: The Russian land in the north was brought under one authority and became the Moscow state." But this scheme which, in the words of Presniakov, Solov'ev considered applicable "to the history of every nation," could not satisfy even the loyal Kliuchevsky.³⁸

Solov'ev's scheme was imaginative and far-reaching, but what was its historical foundation? If Kliuchevsky was too devoted a student to pursue the question, Presniakov had no such inhibitions and went directly to the root of the problem. "Solov'ev," he says, "did not have at his disposal data for the establishment of the 'clan order' as the basic form of the social-civic order of the masses of people in ancient Russia." The clan theory was in fact Solov'ev's "sociological premise," which he conceived as a "'natural and necessary' form of the 'initial order' of the Eastern Slavic tribes." And guided by Kliuchevsky, Presniakov echoed in effect Konstantin Aksakov's

³⁸Cf. Presniakov, "S. M. Solov'ev v ego vlianii na razvitie russkoi istoriografii," p. 79; Kliuchevsky, Sochineniia, VII, 138-143.

trenchant and ground-breaking criticism of Solov'ev's history which he asserted should be known as history of the Russian state even more justly than Karamzin's. For Solov'ev the clan order, Presniakov says, is the "starting point of the development of ancient Russian political forms," which he studies "more in the phenomena of the political order than in the phenomena of the civic life of the people."

Presniakov cites both Kavelin and Chicherin as followers of the Solov'ev tradition. Kavelin held that the "state [or] political element alone concentrated in itself all the interest and all life in ancient Russia"; Chicherin maintained that the "essential significance of our history consists in the development of the state." These and other similar views led Presniakov to the conclusion that "A sad and grim judgment about Russian antiquity became the characteristic feature of the 'Westernism' of the so-called historical-juridical school, and under its influence entered as a material element in the tradition of our social-civic thought." With respect to the Slavophiles, Solov'ev's "constructions and deductions played a purely negative role--a role it might be added not unlike Chaadaev's a few decades earlier.³⁹ And none of the Slavophiles reacted more vigorously to Solov'ev than did Konstantin Aksakov:

Advancing the significance of the "communal" principle of the early Russian order against Solov'ev's "theory of the clan order," Aksakov defended the great maturity and content of ancient Russian public life

³⁹Presniakov saw a certain estrangement if not outright elitism in the attitude of the Westerners, notably Granovsky and Herzen, toward the people, the narod. For Granovsky the "masses . . . stagnate under the weight of historical and natural categories from which only the thought of individual personality is liberated; in this disintegration of thought in the masses is comprised the historical process." And Herzen as early as 1836 believed that "In civic society the progressive principle is the government, not the people [narod]." Presniakov, "S. M. Solov'ev v ego vlianii," pp. 79, 81-82.

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[obshestvennost'] and culture. Phenomena, as for example the izgoi, which to Solov'ev appeared as features of a clan order Aksakov characterized as social-civic, that is, as a more elaborate, better defined, and more complex social-civic order than the primitive clan order based on blood relationships.⁴⁰

Presniakov attributes to this sort of approach the "rich development" of the study of various aspects of Russian "nationality" during the eighties and fifties as well as the closer balance between investigations of political, state, and governmental questions and the cultural life of the people. More specifically the Slavophiles gave strong encouragement to the study of the ancient Russian social-civic order.

The Slavophil point of view on the clan-commune argument, Aksakov's specifically, found a measure of support even from the Westerner P. N. Miliukov. This emerged in an article published in 1886, which was in effect a continuation of his well-known work, Main Currents of Russian Historical Thought. Miliukov turns quickly from brief appraisals of the roles of Solov'ev, Kavelin, Chicherin, and Sergeevich to a sharp criticism of the "juridical" school of historians of which they are the outstanding representatives. Chief among its faults, he says, was the "preponderance of scheme over content": the "juridical formula appeared in scholarship [nauka] with the pretension of being a supreme synthesis, a complete philosophy of history." Even in the hands of its ablest defenders, "this formula could neither convince nor satisfy the opponents of the juridical school." Konstantin Aksakov was "right in his own way [po svoemu] against Solov'ev and N. Krylov, and with Iu. Samarin against Chicherin, when they

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[the Slavophiles] said that the new orientation studies only the forms, and that these historians do not see the 'spirit' behind the forms." Without defining Pogodin's relationship to the Slavophiles, Miliukov refers scornfully to his work, and lest the reader jump to the conclusion that Miliukov was altering his own ideological orientation, he concludes with the words, the "juridical school lay between us and its opponents, forever delivering us from Pogodin's scholarship [nauka], and from the philosophy of Slavophilism."⁴¹

After Kliuchevsky, Presniakov, and Miliukov it might seem superfluous to add Vengerov's opinion on the clan-commune question. Yet it is worth our attention because he was a declared Westerner and as a biographer of Konstantin Aksakov probably knew his life and career more intimately than the others did.

Chapter 8 of the 1912 edition of Vengerov's biography of Konstantin Aksakov has as its heading, "Historical works. Destruction of the theory of the clan order. The theory of the communal-veche way of life." In the course of the chapter Vengerov discusses Konstantin's essay on the ancient Russian and Slav order in some detail, without softening his critical opinions, but on the crucial issue, commune versus clan, he comes out forcefully on Aksakov's side: "Konstantin Sergeevich definitely buried the theory of the clan order in the version in which it was created by Ewers and Solov'ev, and after his article not a single serious investigator would [again] raise this theory." Surveying the views of "historians and jurists" in the fifty years prior to his biography of Konstantin, he gives the following summary:

Beliaev, Leshkov, Kostomarov, Shpilevsky, Gradovsky completely associate themselves with the views of Konstantin Sergeevich about the ancient Russian way of life. Others like Sergeevich, [and]

⁴¹P. N. Miliukov, "Iuridicheskaia shkola v russkoi istoriografii. (Solov'ev, Kavelin, Chicherin, Sergeevich)," Russkaia mysl', June 1886, p. 92.

Vladimirsky-Budanov accept them with some qualifications. Finally a third category came forth with their own theories as Leontovich and Bestuzhev-Riumin with the zadruga theory or Sokolovsky with the regional [volostnaia] theory which in essence uses the same approach as the orientation created by Konstantin Sergeevich."⁴²

This victory of Konstantin Aksakov, which Vengerov so freely and generously acknowledged, was a result not so much of Konstantin's unquestionable proof as of the weaknesses of the proponents of the clan theory. Any consideration of the age, origin, functions, character, historical course, and geographical distribution of the Russian commune, mir, and artel'--to say nothing of the non-Russian--Slav commune raises some extremely difficult and complex questions. Many of these questions Konstantin Aksakov did not even raise, much less answer. Some of them, indeed, can perhaps never be answered, simply because we do not have, and probably never shall obtain the necessary basic information.⁴³ What remains irrefutable, however, is the long-time presence and actual existence of the Russian peasant commune down the centuries to the revolution of 1917 and even into the early Soviet period.⁴⁴

⁴²Vengerov, Konstantin Aksakov, pp. 151, 164. Zadruga was the historical peasant commune among many of the South Slavs.

⁴³I hope to return to the subject of the commune for a more detailed treatment in the next volume of this series.

⁴⁴For the last phase of the commune's existence see, D. J. Male, Russian Peasant Organization Before Collectivization: A Study of Commune and Gathering, 1925-1930 (Cambridge, 1971).