

# State and Revolution

## *Locating Struve in the history of Russian political ideas*

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### 1.

TO LOCATE STRUVE in the history of Russian political ideas implies the attempt to find some pattern in the turmoil into which Russian intellectual life had been drawn at the turn of the 19th century. Struve seems himself to have had a quite tumultuous intellectual career, being successively a representative of both Russian marxism and Russian liberalism, and, finally, liberal conservatism or even monarchism.

Petr Berngardovič Struve (1870-1944) was of German stock and son of an officer in the civil service who ended his career with the governorship of Perm' The position of his father was probably partly responsible for inculcating patriotic feelings in the boy, who in his early youth even had slavophile leanings, and among whose 'intellectual heroes' Ivan Aksakov and Dostoevskij occupied the first place. In his later teens, however, he was exposed to influences which led him towards liberalism (Kindersley 1962, 3of; Pipes 1970, ijff). Struve recalled later that his love of political liberty was 'born of the enormous wealth of Russian spiritual and cultural life, which obviously [had] ceased to fit the traditional legal and political framework of autocracy or absolutism, even if enlightened.' (cit. Pipes 1970, 20.)<sup>1</sup> Being intellectually extremely precocious, Struve was well read in most humanistic disciplines, including philosophy, history and economics, even before entering the university at the age of nineteen. To begin with, Struve was influenced by positivism

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<sup>1</sup> If the reform policies of the 1860s had been continued, so believes Pipes (1970, 20), Struve would probably 'never have changed his political views, for in his heart he was very much a German with an instinctive respect for the state as a creative force'.

and scientism and tended to believe that life and history ran its course according to objective necessities. He had learned also from reading Ključevskij (*Боярская Дума*) that economics was the basic force in history, and later, as a marxist, he was more consistent than Plechanov in his historical materialism, seeing the central problem of Russian marxism as follows: 'What economic processes, what social relations and forces would determine the downfall of absolutism, the conquest of civil and political liberties, the establishment of a constitutional regime [?]' (cit. Kindersley 1962, 33.)

Struve became a marxist in the early 1890s and was for some years (1894-8) reputedly the most prominent marxist and social democrat living inside Russia. He wrote the program resolution for the founding meeting in Minsk of a Russian Social Democratic Party in 1898; this meeting figured as number one of the congresses of the Soviet Communist Party. But, intellectually volatile and restless, Struve soon outgrew or developed beyond marxism, and fell out with Plechanov, Lenin and Martov; the final break occurred in 1901. No wonder, given the fact that he had since 1898-9 publicly repudiated central tenets of the marxist teachings and established connections with *Zemstvo* circles.<sup>2</sup> He was later a leading figure in the Union of Liberation and editor of the journal *Liberation* (*Освобождение*). Having been, as a 'legal marxist', legal enough to live in Russia, as one of the leading active liberals, he had to stay abroad from late 1901 until he returned to Russia in October 1905. Subsequently, he became a member of the Central Committee of the Kadet Party and was elected as a deputy to the Second Duma. Disillusioned, Struve withdrew from active politics in the summer of 1907 to dedicate himself to publicistic and scholarly work. It was in these years that his philosophical and political outlook was finally formed, although he never succeeded in giving a systematic presentation of it. From 1920 he lived as an émigré in several countries until he died in Paris in February 1944. My discussion will

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<sup>2</sup> Shmuel Galai (1973, 28) underlines 'Struve's ability to work simultaneously with people from different social backgrounds and of varying political creeds'. With time, however, this and similar traits served mostly as a liability and earned him the reputation of a consummate renegade.

draw mainly on his writings from the time of the 1905 revolution and the years which succeeded it; in the conclusion, however, I add a few of Struve's comments on the revolution in 1917.

## 2.

Perhaps the main reason why the period we are dealing with was so full of contradictory tendencies has to do with the fact of Russian backwardness, or with the fact of important groups finding their country in a state of backwardness. But Russia was not just a backward country like the Japan of the time, or China; it belonged somehow to the European cultural orbit. But on the other hand it was not just like any other European country, say Spain or Italy; in the eyes of at least some groups it was different, backwards perhaps, but also different in a more or less (opinions differed) positive meaning. In some sense the cultural-ideological situation was felt to be more difficult, complicated and contradictory than in countries like China and Japan. There the cultural gap was so large that the challenge was perceived to be borrowing and learning advanced science, technology, methods etc. from a foreign civilization while keeping and defending domestic cultural and religious traditions as far as possible. Apart from the fact that the geographical proximity in itself made the task of cultural defence a difficult, perhaps even impossible one, the feeling of being a part of European culture and the Christian world would make the idea of Russia defending itself against influence from that very culture somewhat strange. Such an idea could easily have been rephrased as defending backwardness against progress, backward stages against advanced stages of the same cultural continuum or history. It belonged to Europe, and yet it did not belong; it was this, I think, which made possible so many different responses to the challenge of backwardness, or to the general problem of how Russia should relate to Europe.

After the introduction into Russia of the philosophy of history of German romanticism, the majority of Russian ideologists, west-ernizers as well as slavophiles, were convinced that Russia and Western Europe were participants in the same historic project. From Caadaev through Herzen, to Dostoevskij and many of the *narodniki* there goes a line of reasoning which in one way or another

makes a virtue of Russian backwardness: from its position as latecomer Russia could observe dispassionately what was going on in the advanced countries, understand them better than they did themselves, draw lessons both to its own benefit, and, when it became ready to utter the last word to the world, also to the benefit of the western countries. Some of this built upon the assumption that Western Europe had betrayed its own true principles, the roots going back to the schism between the western and the eastern churches. Russia's historic task was then to restore these principles. The more secular version of this idea was expounded by Herzen after 1848 when he claimed that Western Europe had betrayed its liberal traditions and, next and most importantly, its own future, namely socialism. Russia, then, should take charge of Europe's destiny.

There were, however, some anti-westernizing ideologists who did not fit into this model. They explained the differences between Russia and the West in terms of different, even opposite fundamental principles of an organic or perhaps mystic nature. Here we have Chomjakov, Danilevskij and other authors of theories of cultural types, concluding with the Eurasianists. In their theories Russia does not participate in the same universal historic project as the West; and they are not able to see a virtue in Russian backwardness. They would tend rather not to recognize it, because what was of concern to them could not be measured by comparison with western standards.

At the turn of the 19th century, marxism and liberalism were the main westernizing ideologies in Russia. Traditional hegemonic ideologies, such as those of the so-called revolutionary democrats and the *narodničestvo* were more national and slavophile than westernizing; while being on a collision course with the social and economic policies of tsarism, they were to a considerable extent expressions of the same political culture. This may be understood if we take into account the classical popular assumption that the tsar loved the people and wished to do good for it, but was obstructed by the nobility and the bureaucrats who merely served their own interests. This made for ideologies which valued social and economic

reforms against the interests of Russian elites, as opposed to such political reforms as would merely check the power of the tsar to the benefit of the elites (Walicki 1969).

Both marxism and liberalism signified a break with this ideological tradition; they represented a way of thinking that was fundamentally alien to Russian political culture. The same can safely be said of Struve. Although a Russian patriot, he was as both marxist and liberal an alien to his country's (dominating) political culture. Even in the position of legal or even loyal opposition he was more alien than many of the social revolutionaries and anarchists who threw bombs at members of the tsar's government.<sup>3</sup> Struve's monographer, Richard Pipes, argues strongly that he was in heart and soul a convinced liberal even while being a marxist. The main reason why he turned first to marxism was that, being a convinced westernizer and a fighter for freedom, he saw marxism at the time as the best means with which to counteract and discredit the pervasive influence in Russian public opinion of the *narodnik* socialism of Voroncov, Daniel'son and Michajlovskij and related anti-western and anti-modernist currents.

### 3.

Marxism had a peculiar fate in Russia. The Russian translation of the first volume of *Das Kapital* (1867), which came out legally in 1872, was the first commercial success Marx enjoyed as a writer, which was strange for a man whose russophobia had almost been unequalled in the 1850s. And the book was bound to begin with unexpected effects: its principal critique of capitalism and its shocking descriptions of the modern English industry provided the *narodnik* socialists with ammunition for the argument that Russia must go its own way and proceed directly to socialism, bypassing the capitalist stage. The Slavophiles liked the book because it seemed to them that it disapproved of western society in general. Acting as his literary agents and correspondents in Russia, the populists managed to get Marx to contemplate the possibility of a special Russian

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<sup>3</sup> This is plastically borne out by the precautions of secrecy which were taken to cover the private contacts Struve made with Stolypin in the spring of 1907 as if it were a treasonous conspiracy (Pipes 1980, 581).

non-capitalist way leading to socialism by virtue of the primeval communism of the *obščina*. The best known fact here is his correspondence with Vera Zasulič and the extensive drafts of his answer to her. He could not give a definite answer, but would not in principle exclude the possibility. This is certainly not among the best of Marx's writings. After his death it became clear to Engels that Russia was more and more becoming a prey to capitalism, which doomed the prospects of a special Russian way. But he hesitated to endorse the first Russian marxists, i.e. Plechanov and his group, in their absolute war against the *narodniki* and all those who were not yet ready to acknowledge the inevitability of the capitalist way (Rubel 1972).

In an influential book from 1882, *Судьбы капитализма в России*, V. Voroncov had argued that for several reasons Russia would not be able to repeat the English ways and methods of industrial development, the most important being that Russia came late. As a rule, he said, 'the more belated is the process of industrialization, the more difficult it is to carry it on along the capitalist lines.' (cit. Walicki 1969, 121.) But that was not a tragedy for Russia; a non-capitalist industrialization under the auspices of the state would be less painful and more humane in its socialization of labour (that is, lead to socialism, a word Voroncov had to avoid because of the censorship). Finally, he declared (cit. Walicki 1969, 120):

Let us hope that it will fall to the lot of Russia to serve them (the Western workers) as an example in their attempts to reorganize the social system; let us hope that the mission of Russia consists in the realization of equality and fraternity, although she is not destined to fight for freedom.

Ideas such as these must surely have contributed to Struve's aversion to pre-marxist Russian socialism. Therefore, when his radicalization began at the end of the 1880s, he went straight to marxism and social democracy. His point of departure had been the conviction that the country and Russian society had outgrown the government and required political liberty. It must also be said that marxism had a strong attraction for him from a scientific and philosophical point of view; it seemed to be the best theory for an explanation and

understanding of history in general and of Russian history in particular, wherefore he 'thought it possible to be a Marxist without becoming a socialist' (Pipes 1970, 57).

All of this would make him a principled adversary of populism. In addition, increasing industrialization was accompanied by a certain radicalization of the political sentiments in broad professional and intelligentsia groups, especially after the famine of 1891-2. Many of them were disgusted by the government's 'irresponsibility and incompetence in dealing with it' (Kindersley 1962, 40). Furthermore, the famine shattered what still remained of the belief in the peasant *obščina*. Struve held that the Russian rural economy was 'too primitive to support all those who wanted to live off it' (Pipes 1970, 87). And Struve rejected the idea that the Russian peasant was a socialist by nature, and was delighted to find support for that view in Turgenev's letters to Herzen from the 1860s which had just been published.

The points I have drawn above from Voroncov give just one example of how things were thought to turn out differently in Russia from England or Western Europe in general because of the temporal or spatial distance, changing conditions and circumstances over time, developmental lags, conditions of backwardness, etc. The point is not only that the latecomers do not need to follow exactly in the steps of the pioneers; on the contrary, they cannot, even if they wanted to. Nothing repeats itself in history in the sense that the acting persons remain the same, or, to put it another way, the second time the *dramatis personae* know about the solution the first time and will possibly try to bring about an alternative solution.

The last point loomed large before the Russian marxists. Let us consider the psychological situation of the Russian bourgeoisie (or pseudo-bourgeoisie, if you will) : according to the marxist revolutionary sequence the bourgeoisie makes the bourgeois revolution which does away with feudalism and the absolute monarchies, leads to political freedom and democracy, stimulates the capitalist economy, and prepares the ground for the next, socialist revolution, where the proletariat does away with the bourgeoisie. The problem with this scenario is of course that the bourgeoisie is very likely to refuse to play its historical role in the third act to avoid its

demise in the fifth. The more the content of the last act becomes known to the actors, the more it destroys the conditions for the earlier acts to be performed according to the script. Already from the beginning the Russian marxists found that the Russian middle classes feared the proletariat more than they feared the government and the aristocracy; that on account of this fear they would rather betray their real class interests and thus refuse to make a revolution to topple the tsarist regime.<sup>4</sup>

Not unexpectedly, as a marxist, Struve had a certain contempt for the Russian liberals and their alleged acquiescence. In the program resolution from 1898 he explained this with a celebrated formulation: 'the further east in Europe one proceeds, the weaker, more cowardly, and baser in the political sense becomes the bourgeoisie and the greater are the cultural and political tasks that devolve on the proletariat.' (cit. Pipes 1970, 195.) Struve wrote in 1901 that he had always thought that in Russia 'the progressive force is not so much the nascent and rapidly growing bourgeoisie as it is those general conditions of economic and cultural life on the basis of which it grows. I continue now also firmly to adhere to the belief that our country will be moved forward in all respects by the capitalist system and not at all by the classes which command it.' (cit. Pipes 1970, 63.) The proletariat, the other child of capitalism, or more exactly, Social Democracy, will have to take over the mission of spearheading the struggle for political liberty, and this is 'precisely due to the economic backwardness of the country and the political backwardness of the industrial bourgeoisie'. We shall see below that some years later this proved partly wrong as far as concerns the Russian liberals, to the despair of Struve who then had become a liberal himself.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> We should note that this was likely to be a fear imputed to the bourgeoisie by marxist revolutionaries, while the real middle class men thought in more immediate and practical terms. Some may even have discarded the whole scenario as absurd.

<sup>5</sup> Struve would then certainly have found more political wisdom in the way the German bourgeoisie behaved in the revolution of 1848-9, contrary to the exasperated Marx, who repeatedly reprimanded them for neglecting the historical interests of their class in favor of their immediate egoistical interests (MEW 6,195 *and passim*).



#### 4.

Struve's brand of marxism deviates from orthodox marxism both in its theory of the state and, especially, in its theory of revolution. Notwithstanding that the two are interrelated insofar as they both have to do with the concepts of revolution and state, respectively. I shall give a short comment on the problem of the socialist revolution in Russia to show how relevant and perspicacious Struve's deviation was; in hindsight it was much more illuminating than it could have appeared in the late 1890s.<sup>6</sup>

The most peculiar feature about the fate of marxism in Russia is of course the complete unsuitability of Russia's economic and social conditions for a socialist revolution according to marxist specifications. Marxist theory said that socialist revolutions should first occur in the most developed capitalist countries.

Since a revolution which brought the socialists to power did actually take place in Russia, there might have been something wrong with the theory. Soviet theorists were not willing to concede this, and tried in many ways to reconcile theory with reality, in my view mostly unsatisfactorily. Their attempts suffer from confounding two different concepts of revolution.

On the one hand we have the grand historiosophical concept of revolution as the process which leads from one mode of production (feudalism, capitalism, socialism, etc.) to another. On the other we have the everyday-political concept of revolution as the disturbance of regular social and political life, as revolt, turmoil, barricades and riots in the streets, political murders, abdicating kings and overthrown governments and so forth.

Marx seems rarely to have made clear that there are at least two different concepts of revolution behind his actual use of the word.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, he must at least occasionally have been aware of the fact that these are different phenomena, as for instance when he writes of the prospects of a peasant revolution in Russia, that it will

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<sup>6</sup> Thus, I disagree with Kindersley when he writes that (1962, 140) 'in 1917 history should have proved him [Struve] wrong in his own country'.

<sup>7</sup> The best known instance is in *Class Struggles in France*, where he asks of revolutions whether they 'really call in question the bourgeois conditions of life', or if 'they only hit their political formations' (*MEW* 7, 97,440).

be 'an extremely terrible one' (MEW 32, 659). During his life he looked constantly for signs of impending revolutions, and even minor disturbances could put him in high spirits.<sup>8</sup>

Confounding the two concepts might foster the illusionary idea that any revolutionary event heralds the transition to a new mode of production. The illusion was strengthened by the notion of the 'permanent revolution'. The question as to whether a revolution could occur in Russia was raised more and more frequently. Of course it could, was the answer of all the Russian socialists; the time was overripe for a bourgeois revolution, for capitalism was already important. Virtually all Russian marxists shared Struve's opinion that since the weak and cowardly middle class was unable to carry through its own revolution, the proletariat must be the leading and most energetic force in this bourgeois revolution. But precisely because this was a bourgeois and not yet a proletarian revolution, the working class had to be in alliance with other classes. The main theoretical difference between Lenin and those who came to be known as mensheviks lay in the answer they gave to the question as to with which class the proletariat should seek alliance. Lenin answered: the peasant; the mensheviks, on the other hand: the middle classes or the liberal bourgeoisie.

The proletariat, however, was considered the main protagonist also in the next, the socialist revolution, and this helped the notion of permanent revolution to re-emerge. This theory had a certain basis in historical reality (the French Revolution) as well as in Marx's works.<sup>9</sup> This theory is the most elevated and elegant of the political theories of revolution, and therefore also the most apt to create false beliefs and tragic illusions. Trockij for example concluded in 1906 (1975, 195): 'It is possible for the workers to come to power in an economically backward country sooner than in an advanced country.'

We should note that the mensheviks, who advocated an alliance between the working class and the liberal middle class, drew no benefits from the theory of permanent revolution. This was a theory

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<sup>8</sup> Marx and Engels warned occasionally, it is true, of the consequences of premature seizure of power by (the party of) the working class, the best examples being in MEW 3, 34f, MEW 7, 40of, MEW 28, 580.

<sup>9</sup> See especially MEW 7, 94; MEW II, 202; MEW 12,235. 56

which fitted only those who wanted to make a revolution in alliance with the peasants; most of the peasants, primitive and conservative-anarchistic as they were, were the arch-enemies of the bourgeois order which, according to orthodox marxism, was supposed to emerge after the bourgeois revolution. With such allies the vanguard of the working class would be able to prevent the bourgeois order from stabilizing and striking roots in Russian society. This historiosophical logic is useful for an analysis of important aspects of the course of events in Russia in 1917-18.<sup>10</sup>

## 5.

Where Struve first and foremost deviates from marxist orthodoxy is in the theory of revolution. He implicitly accepts the 'political' theory of revolution, that is, revolutions which concern 'only' the political formations. What he criticizes and finally rejects is the grand historiosophical theory of revolution, and he concludes that transitions from one mode of production to another are always evolutionary. He rejects the idea that social revolutions exist in real history in the sense revolutions are usually understood, that is as the social content or corollary of political revolutions.

In his first book, *Критические заметки к вопросу об экономическом развитии России* (1894), Struve's main target is the populists. He regards economic development as a continuum and rejects the dichotomy between capitalism and popular production (народное производство); he rejects also the revolutionary element in Marxian sociology: the transition, or better, the progression from capitalism to socialism must be evolutionary, a continuum. A revolution, on the contrary, would destroy the continuum. (Pipes 1970, 108-10.) According to Struve capitalism would also be a remedy

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<sup>10</sup> In this connection we should also mention the theory about the weakest link in the chain, but such a theory can at most explain why a revolution of some kind erupts, why existing political and social structures crumble and various groups start to fight for power and partly why the Bolsheviks finally won power in October 1917. Briefly, it can only explain breakdowns and disintegrations. The more effective it is in explaining this, the gloomier are the prospects for the future when contemplating what marxist theory said about the material and other preconditions for building a new society after the revolution. Bucharin stated the problem somewhat unwittingly in 1918 ; after having elaborated upon the reasons for the 'revolution of the proletariat', he writes: 'On the other hand, however, the reasons for the easy victory of the proletariat change after the victory dialectically into reasons for the greatest difficulties.' (Bucharin 1990, 202.)

for another Russian ailment, cultural backwardness. Here Struve's westernism was most clear; there was an inner connection between the Western material wealth and its civic and cultural level (Pipes 1970, 64).<sup>11</sup> Capitalism was an absolute precondition of all further progress, and was better than pre-capitalism even if it did not lead to socialism. The book concluded with the celebrated sentence: 'No, let us admit our lack of culture and enrol in the school of capitalism (poiti na vyuchku [k] kapitalizmu).' (cit. Pipes 1970,104.)

In the theory of the state, Struve held the view that the state is 'in the first place, an *organization of order*', independently of whether it is also an organization of domination of one class over others (Kindersley 1962,126). As a liberal Struve retained this idea and incorporated it into his theory of state and culture (see below).

In an important article, published in a German journal in 1899, 'Die Marx'sche Theorie der sozialen Entwicklung', Struve gives a theoretically sophisticated critique of the use of dialectics in Marx which helps him to elaborate his critique of the marxist idea of social revolution as a result of the sharpening of contradictions. He holds that the Hegelian element in marxism constantly threatened to undermine its materialism, i.e. its realism, and cause it to relapse into utopianism. If we want to think of socialism as historically inevitable, we cannot look for traits that separate socialism from capitalism, but should identify traits that unite them 'by way of uninterrupted causation and constant transitions' (Struve 1994a, 143). The faulty idea of socialism as representing the opposite of capitalism might have been inherited from early socialism's vision of capitalism as an increasingly radical break with pre-capitalist social formations.

## 6.

Now I shall look at Struve as a representative of Russian liberalism. His time as an active politician in the liberal camp was even shorter than his marxist period. In a way, he had been happier in the marxist camp, because here he gradually worked himself into an alternative, i.e. liberalism, which he saw as realistic, and where he was

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<sup>11</sup> He spoke once of 'the intensity of Western material culture' (cit. Pipes 1970, 66).

warmly welcomed. After 1905 he gradually fell out with many of the leading Russian liberals, much in the same way as he had done with the social democrats. His political career ended in the summer of 1907, in despair and disillusionment, whereafter he devoted his energies to a fundamental critique of the deep-seated mentality of the Russian intelligentsia, which he saw as maybe the greatest culprit for the so far miserable outcome of constitutional politics in Russia.

I said earlier that Struve discarded marxism's grand theory of revolution, but accepted the political theory. That is not to say that he was particularly fond of revolutions, but they are a manifest fact of history, they happen. Revolutions can be legitimate and understandable movements and reactions of the people, and they can be dangerous when we do not manage to handle them in the right way. 'A revolution ... cannot be defeated: it can only be mastered,' he wrote in the spring of 1905. 'Russia needs a strong government which will not fear revolution because it will place itself at its head... *The revolution in Russia must become government.*' (cit. Pipes 1970, 385.) For Struve, the events of the years 1905-7 put to the test the ability of the actors on the Russian scene to handle the revolution and the possibilities it offered in the right way. He soon became quite pessimistic.

On the face of it, there are some differences in Struve's assessment of the revolution in the midst of events at the end of the year 1905 and the judgment he gives in hindsight in the years 1906-9. But what is different is the views of the active, still hopeful participant and those of the disillusioned analyst. They all spring, however, from the same fundamental way of thinking, the same set of political and philosophical values. While in the first phase it is mostly the bureaucracy or the powers (власти) in general that constitute the target of his sarcasms, the critical emphasis shifts over time to the radical intelligentsia. Common to both actors was their inability to recognize the significance of the act of 17 October 1905. Later Struve used to say that the revolution was consummated at that date.

In December 1905 Struve wrote perceptively on the situation which had emerged after October; he asserted that in such epochs those in power must be courageous and act consistently. They must

exploit the moral authority of the successful revolution and make that authority their own. 'The revolution must be elevated to law.' (Struve 1996, 86.) Why is this so ? Because there is now a power crisis, a governmental crisis. There are many ministers and governors of every kind, but there is no power. Some say that popular representation is necessary to resolve the crisis. This is certainly true, admits Struve: 'But only an authoritative and strong government can give Russia a competent, authoritative and strong popular representation.' (ibid., 88.) Therefore the most important issue is the question of the government.

But the revolutionaries are equally powerless. 'Only the elementary wave of the revolution is strong, at the outset destroying and washing away everything indiscriminately. But precisely this strength, in its very chaos and blindness, gives rise to and seems to perpetuate a general powerlessness.' (ibid., 88.) And finally, Struve writes quite prophetically (ibid., 91):

The Russian revolution and the Russian monarchy both stand now at a turning-point.... Let us assume that the revolution defeats the monarchy tomorrow. This will in no way mean that the triumph of the revolutionary principles stands firm. Such a victory for the revolution will only pave the way for reaction. But also vice versa. A triumph for the forces of reaction ... would be more dangerous for the monarchy than for the revolutionary principles. A Russian monarchy which fails to conclude a peaceful settlement with the revolution, honorable for both sides, but instead conquers it by reaction—such a Russian monarchy will withstand neither a second revolution nor even a second war such as the Russo-Japanese war has proved to be.

The bureaucracy's twin was the sectarian party spirit (партийность). They were feeding upon each other, yet longing to devour each other, and they were both longing for dictatorship. However, 'reaction and anarchy will be defeated by the *revolution elevated to law*.' (ibid., 92.) Even if sectarianism represents only a part of the intelligentsia, it is itself as much to blame as the bureaucracy for not recognizing the 17 October. They both behaved as if nothing had happened. The weakness of the revolution is partly explained by the fact that the 'revolutionaries' neglected its consummation and answered with the call for an armed uprising. Having refused any compromise for a long time, the monarchy's final compromises came only when the capability for compromise was atrophied in

the nation's active elements. Therefore, the monarchy's act of 17 October was regarded only as a sign of weakness and stimulated the desire to do away with the enemy as quickly as possible (Struve 1997, 24).

It was the revolutionary intelligentsia's conservative way of thinking that made it behave like that. 'The Russian revolution was destroyed by the conservatism of its psychology,' Struve (1997, 31) asserted. He wrote in 1907 that the revolution had two components: the intelligentsia with its modern ideas and the popular masses with their elementary instincts. The powerlessness of the revolution was due to these modern ideas, or to the fact that they were brought into the revolution in the form in which they had existed in the minds of the intelligentsia before the revolution (*ibid.*, 23). Struve reminded his readers of Ju. F. Samarin who once in the 1870s, attacking reactionary landowners, coined the expression 'revolutionary conservatism', while admitting the 'logically illegitimate coupling' (логическая беззаконность совокупления) of these contradictory concepts. Struve himself used the expression 'conservative revolutionism' of the psychology of the contemporary revolution (*ibid.*, 31).

Much of Struve's criticism of the revolutionary intelligentsia holds also for large parts of the liberals who did not behave much better than the socialists in the first two Dumas. Let us note that at important junctures of late imperial Russian history, the politically strongest group among Russian liberals assumed an almost extremely leftist position. At the formal foundation of the Kadet party in October 1905, Miljukov, presiding, declared proudly that the program of the party was the most leftist of any liberal party in the whole of Europe. It occupied 'the same left wing of the Russian political movement as did the socialist parties'; groups to the right of the Kadets were referred to as opponents, those to the left as allies (Pipes 1980, 7). To some extent this repeated itself tragically in 1917. So much for the alleged cowardice of the liberals, their toadying to the government and fear of revolutionary socialism!

So, neither the government and bureaucracy, nor the people,<sup>12</sup> nor the intelligentsia knew how to act in the turmoil of revolution. Everybody failed to meet Struve's standards. All of them needed moral and cultural re-education, because it was doubtful whether

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<sup>12</sup> Struve had occasionally entertained illusions about the Russian people, especially after the elections to the First Duma, because of the support the Kadets received from the working class. These illusions disappeared finally when he observed the behaviour of the worker and peasant deputies in the Second Duma (Pipes 1970, 382; 1980, 77).

they possessed the necessary prerequisites for making constructive use of political liberties and reforms. Even revolutions were lost on them.

## 7.

The main points in Struve's program for re-education of the intelligentsia can be indicated by the following catchwords: state, culture, order, discipline, political and personal responsibility, doubt leading to tolerance, compromise. They follow basically from his fundamental view of history's evolutionary character.

Various sections of the intelligentsia, especially the socialists had a tendency to act contrary to central ideas (as Struve saw them) of their ideologies. Whereas 'socialism is the idea of economical organization, of social order', 'the socialists are ready, as it were, to elevate economical disorganization to a principle' (Struve 1997, 13). The class struggle with its slogan of no mercy to the enemy and its lack of compromise demonstrates the anti-cultural and anti-societal character of scientific socialism, 'я бы сказал [его] противосоциалистичность' (ibid., 26).

Already as a marxist Struve underlined the independent significance of the state as embodying the principle of order. However, his sensational fragment on the state from 1908 is not among the best of his writings. It is at best misleading when he discovers the state's 'mystical character' in Peter the Great's admonition to the Senate to think of Russia and not of him, Peter (Struve 1997, 65). But he leads onto a more fruitful track in the following debate with Merežkovskij ; here he argues that there is a mutually supportive connection between state and culture. He saw culture as a never-ending process of subordinating the elementary (стихийные) forces of social and individual spontaneity and of nature to human discipline and consciousness and its ideals. Therefore, he could argue against Merežkovskij that there was in principle no contra-



diction between state and culture (ibid., 74fr). Both are inventions and human devices against disorder and chaos. 'Discipline is connected with culture as close as order with the state.' (ibid., 88.)

Although Struve did not discard the early proposition which motivated his radicalization in the late 18 80s, saying that Russian culture had become so rich, Russian life so complex in general, that it had outgrown its government, this would never make him want to reject the historically evolved Russian state altogether. In its struggle against the government the intelligentsia should refrain from dealing a fatal blow to state power. This was a question of political responsibility that in turn 'creates a special kind of "opportunism", which, though having some superficial features in common with lack of principles, in reality has deep moral roots and complete ethical justification.' (ibid., 16.) If 'opportunism' was broadly conceived of as being morally negative, this was due to the political naivety and inexperience of large groups, in the last resort to their deep-seated conservatism, or—as Struve said in another context— their being the 'spiritual heir of the original cossacks' (cit. Pipes 1980, 84).

At the end of his open letter from 18 51 to Jules Michelet, Herzen (1979, 206f) recounts a Russian fable that tells of a Tsar, who,

suspecting his wife of unfaithfulness, ordered her to be placed in a barrel with her son. The Tsar then had the barrel sealed and cast into the sea.

For many years the barrel floated on the waters. Meanwhile the young prince grew and grew, until he could touch the ends of the barrel with his head and his feet. Every day the lack of space proved more and more irksome to him. One day he said to his mother, 'O royal mother, allow me to stretch myself to my full length'.

'Tsarevich, my son', replied his mother, 'beware of doing what you say: for the barrel will burst and you will perish in the salt waves'. For a moment the Tsarevich was silent, and then, having thought the matter over very carefully, he said: 'Royal mother, I will stretch myself. Better to stretch oneself in freedom once and then perish'.

There, Sir, you have our history.

It will be a black day for Russia when she can no longer find men who are willing to dare everything, whatever the risk, simply for the pleasure of stretching themselves in freedom once.

But there is no immediate danger of this...

This ominous text conveys the ailment of the Russian intelligentsia, as Struve sees it.<sup>13</sup> The fundamental situation was, as he wrote already in the 1890s, that 'Russia had outgrown its government'. Most of the Russian intelligentsia was in agreement with this. The question was what Russia was to do about it. Large parts of the intelligentsia were also in agreement with the tsarevich, agreeing with Herzen. Herein, according to Struve, lay the cardinal sin of the intelligentsia and its lack of political responsibility. His strategy would have been to try carefully to expand the barrel so as to accommodate the growth of the tsarevich, whereas more conservative monarchists would have waited for the tsar to take the barrel ashore in order to expand or open it. (On the metaphorical level Struve's option might seem most impossible, but the metaphor was not his.)

Struve would also have rejected the historical conception lying beneath Herzen's text in that it restricts far too much the scope of possible constructive action. His evolutionism would have permitted more than the simple choice between revolution and acquiescence. Furthermore, he would have emphasized the importance of distinguishing between state and government, which he felt the intelligentsia was not willing to do, in its irreligious apostasy (отщепенство) and estrangement and hostility towards the state (Struve 1997, 192). This conditioned its moral recklessness and political impotence (ibid., 199).

Linking culture to consciousness and discipline, Struve reaches a concept of culture which is open to doubt concerning its own truth and shows tolerance for other cultures. This concept of culture differs from that implied in Descartes's opposition between culture (as largely identical with custom and example) and reason,<sup>14</sup> as well as from the actual culture from which the Russian revolutionaries derived their belief in a personal and collective infallibility, which had no room for mercy for enemies (Struve 1997, 25). This makes Struve one of the most accomplished westernizers in the history of Russian

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<sup>13</sup> I should make clear that I have found no reference in Struve to this fable nor to Herzen's comments on it.

<sup>14</sup> See Gellner (1992, 2f) for a succinct rendering of Descartes's argument that reason and doubt are the sole possible means to deal with the problem of comparing one's own culture with other and highly different cultures.

thought. Finally, there is a close link between political (and personal) responsibility and compromise: 'those who refuse any compromise with the government, lose the right to accuse it of anything, make it irresponsible towards themselves.' (ibid., 33.)

Struve said of the Russian people that it is its elementary instincts which make it insensitive to the negative sides of the revolution. In the people's tenacity (упор) there appears the same insensitive conservatism that previously marked the autocracy. Such is the formula for the transformation of autocratic Russia into revolutionary Russia: 'Conservatism without traditions, without sustaining ideas, has been transformed into a revolutionary element [стихия] without any creative idea and organizational discipline, but with the same enormous tenacity as before.' (Struve 1997, 24.) This is a reformulation of one of the central ideas in Caadaev's famous *First Letter*, the idea that the Russians did not have a past nor a future, living sluggishly in complete stagnation, without any traditions and regulative ideas, though at the same time having a peculiar resemblance to nomads.

It was to liberate Russia from the burden of this uncultured and anarchic conservatism that Struve could still, and in 1917 in particular, speak of revolution in a positive (and long-term) sense. Two conflicting processes were going on in Russia, he wrote in November 1917; one was in essence counter-revolutionary and destructive, it sought to do away with what had been achieved during the last decennia.<sup>15</sup> The other process was the true Russian revolution; it had been launched in 1902 when the Union of Liberation was founded. It strove to foster in Russia the rule of law, economic rationality and efficiency, cultural creativity, on the basis of freedom and property. In November 1919 Struve had to admit that the true Russian revolution had been defeated (at least for the time being) by the bolshevik movement. This was firstly a triumph for the traditional attitude of the intelligentsia towards economics.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, in bolshevism there was a clash between two sides of socialism (egalitarianism as opposed to organizational and economic efficiency), and 'this clash demonstrated the impossibility of

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<sup>15</sup> Struve once depicted the bolsheviks in the following words (cit. Pipes 1980, 244): 'Bolshevism is a mixture of international poison and good old Russian moonshine.'

<sup>16</sup> of which Struve had given a penetrating critique in an article from 1908 (1997, 202-5)

socialism as it had been conceived of so far, that is as a comprehensive system.' (Struve 1994b, 152.) This Russian revolution justified the idea of 'one of the greatest minds in Russia, the lonely Caadaev: "We live, as it were, in order to give some lesson to humanity."' (ibid.) One might object that it was a bit too early to pass such a verdict on the Soviet experiment already in 1919, but as a prediction it holds good.

TROMSØ

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