

The National Economy and the Religious Personality (1909)

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In Memoriam to Ivan Feodorovich Tokmakov¹

The political economy of our times belongs to sciences that do not remember their own spiritual kinship. Its origins are lost in the quicksand of philosophy of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. At its cradle stand, on one side, the representatives of the Natural Law doctrine with their belief in the inviolability of human nature and pre-established natural harmony, and, on the other side, preachers of utilitarianism—J. Bentham and his disciples who proceed from the notion of society as a summation of disconnected atoms, mutually jostling representatives of different interests. The society is viewed here as the mechanics of these interests, the social philosophy is transformed into the “political arithmetic” of which Bentham dreamt. The political economy assimilated from him is the abstract, one-sided, simplified notion of man, a notion that still reigns in political economy. In this, among other ways, the prerequisite of the classic political economy was formed—the notion of “economic man,” who does not eat and sleep but always calculates interests, seeking the greatest benefit at lowest costs; a slide rule that reacts with mathematical accuracy to the outer

¹ Tr. note: ~~Ivan F. Tokmakov (1856–1908), writer and archeologist, worked as archivist at the Emperor’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs Main Archive. He wrote two main historical works dedicated to the history of book trading and the coronation of Russia’s emperors as a sacred ceremony, and was also famous for his empirical and statistical history reviews of different towns, villages, and monasteries.~~

Ivan F. Tokmakov (1836-1909), to whom the article is dedicated to, is not the "writer and archeologist" mentioned in the footnote, but Bulgakov's father-in-law, a Crimean wine and tea merchant, who just died that year. The Tokmakov's financed a hospital, a public library and other social services.

mechanism of redistribution and production, which is governed by its own laws of life. Already A. Smith has made a basic methodological distinction between the altruistic and egoistic instincts of man, and, notably, he studied the former in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which falls into the department of ethics, but the impacts in the latter—*The Wealth of Nations*—belong to the department of political economy. Thus, political economy began its existence with a fractional value instead of a whole unit. In the future, this conventional methodological distinction has been similarly forgotten by Smith's continuators. With Ricardo, the classic political economy adopted as dogma the teaching of Bentham. In this way, a worldview was formed that later received the name of the Manchester School. The living psychological personality has been scratched out by this school and substituted by the above-mentioned methodological prerequisite of the economic man, the society has been converted as if into a sack of atoms that do not need to interfere with their mutual motion, while the atoms themselves remain mutually impenetrable. Socialism was created as if it was an antithesis to both classical political economy and Manchesterianism, but, in its basic features, it just followed the spiritual tradition of Bentham, as personified by Robert Owen in England; by Lassal and especially Marx in Germany and; in general, by the most popular form of the materialistic concept of socialism. In the same measure as Manchesterianism, it mechanizes the society and eliminates the living human personality and the idea, intrinsically linked with this personality, of responsibility and creative will. As an illustration, let us recall at least the doctrine of R. Owen that the human character is entirely formed by external circumstances and that, for this reason, personal responsibility and freedom do not exist. Notably, following this fatalistic concept in obvious contradiction with himself, Owen still found it possible to call people for social reforms, addressing their conscience, their freedom. A similar notion of personality lay in the foundations of economic materialism, and, in building on it, socialism suffers the same contradictions. As far as socialism remains in the Manchester School, it is Manchesterianism inside-out, or counter-Manchesterianism; with the only difference that instead of a lonesome individual there is a social class here, that is, a summation of personalities with a common interest—the same economic man, but not an individual, instead a group and a class.² Economic categories are essentially interpreted as masks or cothurnus in an ancient Greek tragedy that hide a living face. These categories transform human beings as if

² Some time ago I made this comparison from a Marxist viewpoint, in the review, "The Classic School and the History-Ethical Current in the Political Economy," *Novoe slovo* (1897): 11.

into characters of medieval *moralite*, entirely personifying separate features. They give merely a geometric drawing of human relations, sketching only the most common contours and *silhouettes*. An example of this peculiar stylization might provide at least the characteristics of capitalists as representatives of the urge to accumulate, as we find it in Marx:

Except as personified capital, the capitalist has no historical value, and no right to that historical existence.... But, so far as he is personified capital, it is not values in use and the enjoyment of them, but exchange-value and its augmentation, that spur him into action. Fanatically bent on making value expand itself, he ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production's sake; he thus forces the development of the productive powers of society, and creates those material conditions.... As such, he shares with the miser the passion for wealth as wealth. But that which in the miser is a mere idiosyncrasy, is, in the capitalist, the effect of the social mechanism, of which he is but one of the wheels.... At the historical dawn of capitalist production ... avarice, and desire to get rich, are the ruling passions.... When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit, becomes a business necessity to the "unfortunate" capitalist.... Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets!... Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake."³

Similar masks are put on the face of workers, transformed into abstract "Proletarians of all countries," with no individual characteristics, united only by grim hatred against capital. Remember the classic ending of *Capital*, the description of the last scene of capitalistic drama where literarily only iron masks take part:

Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of

³ *Capital*, vol. 1, pp. 516–17. Tr. note: The text is from Karl Marx's *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, *The Process of Capitalist Production*, pt. 7, chap. 24, par. 39, and following.; quotations in Bulgakov's version do not differ significantly from the third German edition of *Das Kapital*, ed. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1906).

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labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.⁴

Who from the Marxists did not know these lapidary lines by rote and was not repeating them in pitpat heart! Yet, these represent a rare example of Bentham's stylization led to an extreme—simplification of real life in which all colors are deleted as in this [Marx's] paragraph.

Generally speaking, such an approach to political economy is both correct and incorrect: It is correct as a methodological convention, as a way of artificial simplification for research purposes. Political economy proceeds in this way as does any other science: In order to inquire about something it forgets about everything else, acting, as people now say, "pragmatically." The mistake starts only then when the conventionality of the method is forgotten and when pragmatic stylization is perceived and actual reality and living human beings are replaced by methodological ghosts. This, in part, explains the domination of a peculiar kind of economism, that poisoned the nineteenth century's spiritual climate. There is a sign of equality between the economic man, as a convention of political economy, and man in general; and the rest that does not fit into the presumed framework is either cut out or is violently crowded out; thus, obviously, everything individual and concrete that contradicts the convention is mercilessly destroyed. However, it should never be forgotten that political economy is a *historical* science, that it is science about the historic and, therefore, specific and that what "theoretical" political economy allows itself just for the purpose of simplification by no means corresponds to the living historic reality, or more precisely, corresponds only partially. In reality, the economic man of the political economy is just one, although very important, side of the life of the human personality, of the manifestations of the active "self." The national economy, as such, results from the activities of personalities and the development of productive forces and is an economic aspect of the creativity of the people and is to some extent a phenomenon of its spiritual life. Once A. Smith unfortunately distinguished between productive and unproductive labor, determining that (in an economic sense) productive labor finds its immediate expression in material goods, in things, while unproductive labor is every other type of labor, he had, although as a purely methodological differentiation as well, established a profound and completely illegitimate middle ground that divides economic and spiritual activity; and this differentiation, irrespective of its conventionality, is still disturbing economic thinking, which

⁴ *Capital*, vol. 1, pt. 8, chap. 32, par. 32.2.

anyway suffers an extraordinary mechanization of the economy. Of course, it is impossible to deny that the economy is a mechanism as well, in particular that is true for the contemporary national and international economy, but at the same time it is not and never could be only a mechanism, in the same way the personality is not only a slide rule of interests but is a principle of living creativity. Taking into account this notion of the [economic] mechanism, it is not possible even to fully understand economic life: outside personal initiative, and outside understanding it as creative, and outside diverse impulses of human will—it is impossible only by routine or even through the dominance of selfish interest, even to retain the existing economic *status quo*, let alone the possibility of economic progress, necessary at least due to the Malthusian threat of ever-growing population. Human personality is an independent economic factor: In some sectors, this fact is more obvious, such as, for example, in agriculture; in others, this is less obvious, as in industry, but it is a fact. The economy is an interaction between freedom, the personal creative initiative, and the mechanism, the iron necessity; it is the struggle of the personality with the mechanism of natural and societal forms in the name of adjusting them to the needs of the human spirit. In a word, *the economy of the household is led by its master*.⁵

Thus, we have already reached the very theme of this essay. In the human soul there is a constellation of different motivations, selfish as well as idealistic, and political economy by no means must strike out motivation of the latter type. In defining such motivations one should take into account ideal values, and in particular such factors as general worldview and religion. In this way, religion is introduced in the realm of economic life study as a factor of economic development because it is a factor in the formation of human personality. The dependence of economic life on factors of religious order was not sufficiently studied until recently, thanks to the dominance of economism in [social] science. It is possible to say that attention to these matters is just being awakened in recent times. This theme seems quite attractive to a historian of the economic way of life and economic ideas and to no lesser extent to a philosopher of religion. A special case in this respect is the history of the countries dominated by Buddhism, with its aggrieving impacts on all walks of life and, especially, on man's economic life. For this reason, the issue of the link between economic stalemate and the caste structure of Eastern countries under Buddhism is a topic for an absolutely separate study. In a similar manner, the attitude of antiquity to economic labor,

⁵ Tr. note: In the original text, there is a repeated wordplay. In Russian, *economy* (or *hoziajstvo*) may equally mean “household,” “sole proprietorship,” and/or “business.” *Hoziajn* (i.e., “economic actor”) translates as “master” or “owner.”

as much as it was determined by the general religious and philosophic worldview along with societal causes, also must constitute a subject of profound scientific interest. The new, European attitude toward economic labor has been historically introduced by Christianity, and, in this sense, namely within Christianity, potentially emerged both the national economy and the science about national economy. A further turning point in this development within Western Christianity is introduced by the Reformation, and contemporary studies have come a long way in understanding and articulating the meaning of this breakthrough. Finally, the dominant intellectual mood of modern times, with its economic materialism and mechanistic worldview, is itself a factor of economic life, influencing its nature. We will perceive the pivot of our discussion when we concentrate our attention on the different motivations for human labor. Economic labor may be exercised exclusively under the pressure of necessity, as labor “in the sweat of one’s brow” to provide for subsistence, but this by necessity rarely describes man’s attitude to his labor. Labor is not only tied to dependence, but in a majority of instances, it includes a certain ethical element: It might be observed as the fulfillment of religious and moral duties. In connection to religious notions, labor, even “in the sweat of one’s brow,” is reflected, for instance, in the consciousness of the Russian peasantry as a specific religious deed (to the extent it is possible to judge from different studies, and, among other sources, from the collection of proverbs and superstitious beliefs expressing the worldview of our peasantry, found in the four volumes published by Ermolov).⁶ A religious-ethical attitude toward labor is generally typical for times when a religious worldview has been dominant. In such times, labor is an element of the overall system of asceticism. In its practical meaning asceticism is an attitude toward the world, related to recognition of supreme, above-the-world, transcendental values where individual assessment is subordinated to these values. The asceticism reaches beyond the limits of the immediate, immanent entity of this world as it is given. However, exactly as if due to its abnegation of the world, asceticism may—and with certain tension it inevitably does—win upon the world, as it is the case, by the way, with every profound idealistic aspiration. As one contemporary German scholar has duly noted:

Asceticism by itself is not only mortification of the flesh and a dualistic meditateness but also a positive work for the benefit of the whole, a means to serve Corpus Christianum, and, an aspiration (*Enfesselung*) of the religious

⁶ Tr. note: The author refers to Alexey S. Ermolov’s (a well known nineteenth-century Russian agrarian businessman, theorist, and statesman) *Folklore Agricultural Wisdom in Proverbs, Sayings, and Superstitious Beliefs* (St. Petersburg, 1901–1904).

sense, at the same time an emotional aesthetic enlightenment of the world. Such asceticism did not impede and could not impede cultural development.⁷

Asceticism is characteristic of the so-called medieval or monastic worldview. It is in the monastic practices of both Western and Eastern Christianity where asceticism receives the clearest form of expression of its attitude toward economic labor: It is considered here as a means of ascetic exercise in general, as a docility, which meaning and value, at least partially, is beyond the labor process.

Let's refer to some examples. St. Benedict used to call idleness "an enemy of the soul" and repeat that "therefore you must devote certain time to manual work." Pope Gregory the Great says: "If someone wants to acquire a firm value of meditation, he should first exercise in the field of labor." Bernard of Clairvaux teaches in the follow manner: "She who serves Christ must always pray, read, and work, in order not to allow the spirit of temptation conquer the idle mind. Sensational desires are to be suppressed by labor. When you stop reading, you start working and never stay idle, for idleness is an enemy of the soul." The Cartesian priest Gwigo says: "A serious and right-minded character is always ready to work. He is not distracted but always concentrated since he does not take so much the work itself but the objective in which he labors, namely—the acquisition of supreme perfection."⁸

Similar is the judgment of the prime medieval authority of Western Christianity, Thomas Aquinas. It was in the ambiance of the medieval monastery wherefrom comes the famous formula beloved by Carlyle: *laborare est orare*; that is, labor in some respect equals prayer. For the characteristic of Eastern monasticism, we will refer to the reflection of St. Theodore Studite whose monastic

⁷ E. Troeltsch, "Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen," *Archiv fuer Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 27, Band. 1, Heft 1, 1908, § 59. [Adolf von] Harnack, in his study of monkhood ("Das Moenchtum," in his *Reden und Aufsaezte*, Band 1, § 84–85) points out: "In the abnegation of the world we encounter all most passionate and gentle movements of the soul. Arts, poetry, and science were there diligently cultivated, *thus the beginning of civilization in our fatherland is merely a chapter from the history of the monkhood*" (underlined by the author).

⁸ The examples are taken from Prof. Euken's *History and System of Medieval Worldview*, Russian ed. (St. Petersburg, 1907).

constitution received the importance of a manual for managing Eastern monasteries (“*Dobrotolyubie*”, IV, 27):⁹

All of you, teaches he the brotherhood, are obedient to one another as a living part of the same body. If the eye does not govern the hand, if one hand does not support the other, if the legs do not walk in a way that is good for the entire body, if at the end every part starts acting at its own will, they will not only lose their own strength but disordering themselves they would disorder the entire body. That is why—enjoy everyone when there is a need to work more for the others, abiding cold, rain and heat... We do not shed blood as martyrs, our limbs are not being cut and bones not broken; but if we apply to our easy and limited labors a denial of own will and strive to oblige and serve our brothers with love, we will get to resemble much suffering martyrs and even God, Who did accept the crucifix and death. Be good souls, labor!

Thanks to this concept determining the whole way of life, the monasteries even of today remain schools of labor, in which, according to the expression of one Western monk, “every one must be his own ox.” Hagiographies of both the Eastern and the Western Church abound with evidence of monasteries’ educational significance (it suffices just to recall what labor means in the hagiography of Rev. Sergey).

Due to ascetic discipline, the monasteries played a key role in economic development of the Europe of those times, when colonization and cultivation proceeded with great difficulties. Inasmuch as the present rests on the shoulders of the past, we can generally claim that our contemporary economic life is built upon the foundations set by the ascetic monastic labor of medieval Europe.

The monks contributed a great deal to clearing up dense forests of Central and Northern Europe, and to the conversion of wood and wet lands into fertile field and pastures. In particular, they were occupied planting gardens and tree farms.... They converted the river banks of the Seine, Ronne, and Mosel, and

⁹ Tr. note: St. Theodore of Stoudios (758–826), “*Dobrotolyubie*” (literally “Love of the Good”) is the Russian translation of “*Philokalia*” (or “Love of the Beautiful and Holy”)—one of most complete handbooks on proper Christian virtues and spiritual living of clergy and laity alike in Orthodoxy. The first Slav translation appeared in 1793, and the first Russian translation in 1822, from where it spread around the Orthodox world; the first English translation was done by Faber and Faber Ltd., in 1974. Complete editions of “*Philokalia*” in Orthodox countries became widely available in the last ten years.

the deserted lands of Normandy into gardens and vineyards. Thus, the most abiding ascetics were the hardest workers.¹⁰

Professor Klyuchevsky¹¹ speaks of a similar significance for Russian monasteries:

Three quarters of fourteenth and fifteenth century monasteries in depopulated areas were such [agrarian] colonies; they were established by monks who left other monasteries, from similar depopulated areas. A desert monastery would nurture in its brotherhood, at least among the most susceptible brothers, a very special mood: a specific concept of monastic objectives was formed; the founder has left for the woodlands in order to attain salvation in a quiet solitude, convinced that would not have been possible in the secular world, among peoples' squabble. He would attract similar searchers of voicelessness and they would build a desert home. The rigid way of life, glory of the deeds attracted from afar not only prayers and contributors but also peasants who would settle around a prospering cell on which they could rely as both religious and economic support; peasant would cut the forest around, build villages, clear up fields, "alter the desert," as hagiography of Rev. Sergey Radonezhski tells us. In such cases monastic colonization meets peasants' one and serves it as unintended guide. Thus, from a hermit's cell in solitude grew a populated, rich, and noisy monastery. Often, however, there would be a disciple of the founder among the brothers, disturbed by this non-monk noise and wealth; following the spirit and the word of the teacher, with his blessing the disciple would leave for another untouched desert and there in the same order would emerge another forest cell. Sometimes, even often, the founder himself would undertake the venture to repeat the experience.

Thus, concludes Professor Klyuchevskiy, from individual and scattered local instances a broad colonization movement had emerged, which starting from a few centers, would for four centuries penetrate even the most unreachable, bearish corners of central and northern Russia, building monasteries in the vast wilderness.

Turning our attention to contemporary capitalism, we must note here that the impact of iron necessity is, of course, much stronger in comparison to simpler forms of natural exchange economies with their weak exchange mechanisms. This

¹⁰ Euken, *History and System*, 438.

¹¹ Tr. note: Vasily Osipovich Klyuchevsky (1841–1911) was a reputable historian; the author refers to his twenty-fourth lecture of the *Course of Russian History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968).

iron mechanism presupposes also a special economic psychology. Contemporary capitalism is also linked to a special capitalist spirit, which corresponds to a complex economic mechanism. Sombart considers economic rationalism, methodical adjustment of means to ends, a key feature of this capitalist spirit. This rationalism is objectively embodied in modern technology, representing an application of rational scientific technology. We observe this rationalism of economic life as something already established, but how was it formed; what are the spiritual prerequisites of the capitalist spirit and, to what extent, that of capitalism itself? By outer appearance, capitalist rationalism seems close to the economic man of the classic school, but where does this economic man descend from? From Bentham and his political arithmetic, or is there a completely different origin? In recent years, several scientific studies have been dedicated to answering this question. First, we should mention the fundamental investigation of Professor Max Weber *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus (The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism)*.¹² Under the impression of Weber's study, Professor Schultze-Gawernitz has written his latest book.¹³

In these studies, the genesis of the capitalist spirit is linked to the spirit of Protestantism and Protestant asceticism. The roots of the contemporary national economy are being revealed not only in the economic needs of our time but also in the spiritual life of human beings. A particularly important role in this genesis is played by some current of the Reformation and Calvinism first of all, which developed in England as Puritanism. England's modern historical basic peculiarity is that here the Reformation goes hand in hand with the Revolution; thus, the main achievements of the liberation movement as well as its ideas (specifically, the ideas about the right of man and the citizen, and about freedom of conscience and speech) are inseparable from the religious movement of the Reformation. The same is true for the economic fate of England. The origin of English capitalism is rooted not only in the enclosure of the municipal fields and the industrial revolution but also in the spirit of Puritanism. As it is well-known, Calvin, the "Protestant Pope," as contemporaries used to call him, contributed a great deal to the economic flourishing of the Geneva Republic.¹⁴ Montesquieu in

¹² *Archiv fuer Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* (1904), 1; (1905), 1.

¹³ *Britischer Imperialismus und englischer Freihandel* (Leipzig, 1906).

¹⁴ The four hundred year anniversary of Calvin in 1909 motivated the publication of a number of monographs about him and editions of his works and letters. For a brief and comprehensive review on Calvin, see *Staehtlin*, in *Realencyclopädie fuer prot. Theorl. U. Kirche*, herausg. Von hauk u. Herzog, 3-te Ausg., and the series

The Spirit of Laws notes that “Englishmen are superior to all other nations of the world in three important respects: devotion, trade, and liberty,” linking all three. Indeed, the link among Calvinist devotion, a merchant’s entrepreneurship, and freedom-loving is always noted in the history of Calvinism. As it is remarked by the scholar of economic history, Gothein:

One who attempts tracing capitalistic development in whatever country of Europe; he would always encounter one and the same fact: Calvinist Diaspora is at the same time a seedbed of capitalist economy. The Spaniards had expressed this in the following formula of bitter reflection: heretics facilitate trade spirit.¹⁵

What constitutes the intrinsic, historically established, link between Calvinism and capitalism? The substance of the matter is the following. The essential feature of the capitalist spirit is that the ideal capitalist considers he has a responsibility toward his proprietorship and admits it is his duty to improve it through productive investment; the supreme good of the capitalist ethic is to increase wealth as a goal in itself. Namely, the peculiar idea of the capitalist ethic about the professional duty toward the proprietorship establishes that specific capitalist spirit without which contemporary capitalism would not have been possible, as it was psychologically (and not just economically) impossible in the depths of the Middle Ages. This is why its origin is connected not only to a series of objective economic and partially technical developments but also with a new direction of creative initiative and personal energy. Industrial innovators are usually subject to accusations; around their names people build legends, often terrifying, and it is rarely noticed to what extent firm character and extraordinary self-command, in short, certain individual moral virtues, are really important for the formation of such [ideal] types. Contemporary capitalism loses, to a significant measure, these characteristics and is led by rude self-interest or just by habitual routine, taking care of the family, and so forth. The ideal capitalist, however, has certain

in: Religionsgesch. Volksbuecher: *A Baur*, Johann Calvin (Tuebingen, 1909), for a characterization of Calvinism, see *Theobald Ziegler*, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik* (Strassburg, 1902). Tr. note: Sergey Bulgakov shares the nineteenth-century view of Calvin as the Protestant Pope, but this view has been successfully challenged in more recent scholarship.

¹⁵ Gothein, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Schwarzwaldes*, 1, 674 (Quoted by Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*; Sombart adds that “Protestantism, especially in the form of Quakerianism and Calvinism, significantly promoted capitalist development, and this is a well-established fact to dwell into further explanation” (1, 380–81).

ascetic features and has as little in common with these contemporary characters as they have with those sons who squander the wealth accumulated by their fathers. The German word *Beruf*, and even more so the English *calling*, have a religious touch—meaning religious calling to a certain secular profession. On the contrary, Roman Catholic nations, as well as Russian and classic antiquity do not have in their languages a word of a similar meaning, thus common in all Protestant nations. The contemporary usage of *Beruf* is borrowed from Luther’s translation of the Bible.¹⁶ This concept expresses a dogma central to all Protestant denominations. Protestantism, in opposition to medieval Catholicism, starts with a principal elimination of the contraposition between Church and secular, or worldly, while secular crafts, civic professions, and activities at home or at an enterprise are most-considered as an execution of religious duties, of which the scope is thus broadened to embrace all secular activities. At the same time, Protestantism proclaims the autonomy of the secular life, striving to remove this life from Church influence, out of the papal hierarchocracy. In this we find a Protestant secularization of Christianity, accompanied, however, by a religious ethicization of the secular life.¹⁷ Namely, those Protestant sects, in which these ideals of religious ascetic regulation of the secular life were particularly strong, have played the most important role in the making of the capitalist spirit, as by Calvinism in the Reformation; Pietism in Lutheranism; Methodism in Anglicanism; and, at last, from the sects developed on Anabaptists’ soil—Quakerism. In the history of

¹⁶ This is the case of translating the text of *The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach*, 11, 20–21, the corresponding verse of the Russian translation is “trust the God and indwell in your work” (i.e., *Beruf*). Tr. note: Similar is the translation in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible by the National Council of Churches in America: “Stand by your covenant and attend to it, and grow old in your work.”

¹⁷ According to Gothein, “the emancipation of the state and the national economy from the Church’s influence is a substantial part of Luther’s life-long endeavor” (see the article “Renaissance und Reformation” in *Handwoerterbuch der Staatswissenschaft*). Harnack notes: “Civic profession, a humble activity at home or in the yard, at a factory or in service is considered not like an occupation that distracts from the heavenly matters but as true spiritual engagement ... Luther proclaimed the freedom and responsibility of the laborers.... He reestablished every professional labor in its proper meaning...” (Harnack, *Reden und Aufsätze*, 1, p. 162, the Speech of Luther).

Compare: F. Naumann’s article “Beruf” in the newest encyclopedia “Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart,” *Handwoerterbuch in gemeinvesendlicher Darstellung unter Mitwirkung von H. Gunkel und O. Scheel*, herausgegeben von Fr. M. Schiele, 11/12 Lieferung (Tuebingen, 1909).

capitalism, the most significant role was played by Calvinism, especially in its British version—Puritanism. Why, however, did it receive such importance? We know that the Calvinist dogma was the predestination doctrine: Some are doomed for destruction, others for salvation by an eternal and absolutely incomprehensible, for us, act of God.¹⁸ It seems this fatalistic doctrine should have completely paralyzed individual will and responsibility. However, on the contrary, the practical application of the dogma turned out to be most supportive in making [strong] personal character and energy. In the mood of people brought up within this doctrine it should have remained as, first of all, an “unheard-of feeling of inner solitude of the individual” (Weber, 1, p. 11).¹⁹ [It should have] created a totally disillusioned, pessimistically colored individualism: Everyone is in himself and for himself, people are separated by the act of the eternal predestination as if by glass fences, transparent but impenetrable. The state of being chosen is impossible to comprehend as well as it is unachievable, it manifests itself in certain behaviors. Everyone should deem themselves chosen, since there is no possibility to prove the opposite and their own skepticism about this should be banished as the devil’s obsession. As to testing the state of being chosen, it is only possible through observing one’s own behavior, sleepless self-control, and a constant “feeling the pulse.” Persistent life-discipline, expressed first of all in a relentless professional labor, is the first Calvinist practical implication. The Calvinist God requires secular glorification through sacred living: The everyday life should be persistently determined by ascetic discipline. What had been considered manda-

¹⁸ In chapter 3, paragraph 3 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, adopted in this particular paragraph by the Independent and Baptist denominations, we read: “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.” And paragraph 5: “Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, has chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace”; and paragraph 7: “The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extends or withholds mercy, as He pleases, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.”

“I would rather go to hell than to such a God that compels me to respect,” noted Milton regarding this doctrine. Tr. note: Translated from the author’s quotation.

¹⁹ Tr. note: Translated from the author’s quotation.

tory only for the monks in monasteries is exposed here as a general requirement applicable to worldly professional life. Those passionate, serious, and concentrated characters, who previously contributed their best to monasticism, now, through Calvinism, remain in the world and actively express themselves. Through its idea of necessary justification of one's own faith through secular profession, Calvinism provided motivation for development and linked practical ethics with the doctrine of predestination. Instead of the spiritual aristocracy of the monks out and above the world, it exhibited the spiritual aristocracy of the chosen by God, for eternity the saints in the world. Similar concepts of a secular monasticism are characteristic, although to a lesser extent, for Pietism, for Methodism, and especially for Quakerism, which played an outstanding role in the political and social history of England and the United States. The brevity of this essay does not allow us to discuss specific features of these doctrines.²⁰

All these sects share a common feature: They require their members to perform an ascetic lifestyle. As Weber speaks about them: "Christian asceticism has gone into the markets of life, and closed the doors of the monastery, and began charging its methods namely into secular everyday life in order to transform it into a rational life in the world, but at the same time out-of-this-world and not for the sake of this world." Wherefrom derives the constant preaching of hard physical and spiritual work, both as an ascetic means and end. This is namely not the labor as such required from a person, but a rational methodically measured professional

²⁰ For related details, besides already mentioned articles of M. Weber, see the brief but very comprehensive essays in: *Realencyclopädie f. prot. Theol. u. Kirche von Hauk und Herzog*, 3-te Ausgabe. About Quakerianism see, besides the article of Weingarten, *Die Revolutionskirchen Englands* (Russian translation is available), also: Schneckeburger, *Vorlesungen ueber die Lehrbegriffe der kleinen protestantischen Kirchenparteien*, hrsg. Von Hundesgarten (Frankfurt a. M., 1863). *For a characterization of the strong societal importance of Quakerianism in Schultze-Gavernitz, Britischer Imperialismus*, 61–62. It is worth mentioning that the first creator of the surplus theory of value, deserving Marx' sympathy (named "a phenomenon of the bourgeoisie political economy") was the Quaker John Bellers. His original viewpoint—so much alien to the receptor of his economic ideas, Marx—consisted in the following: "It is regrettable to observe that the body of many poor, which could and should serve as a Dome for the Holy Spirit, turns out a repository of such vice and sin." (Tr. note: Translated from the author's quotation.) Bellers' main treatise, in which he elaborates the so-significant for our times idea of cooperation, is titled: *Proposals for Raising a College of Industry of All Useful Trades and Husbandry* (1695); see also his *Essays about the Poor, Manufactures, Trade, Plantations, and Immorality, and of the Excellency and Divinity of Inward Light* (1699).

labor. It turns out that among the features of a business or profession its yield is mentioned as an attribute of utility and even a feature pleasing to God.

If God shows you the way—says the Puritan preacher Richard Baxter—on which you may legally earn more, without injuring your soul and that of others, and you refuse and choose the lesser profitable way; then you obliterate one of the objectives of your calling, you refuse to be a steward of God and to accept His gifts for the possibility to use them for Him, if and when he wishes so. Of course, not for the pleasure of the flesh or for sin should you work, but to get richer in the name of God. (Quoted in Weber, 1, p. 378)²¹

Desiring to be poor, as it was often commented in these circles, equals the wish to be sick. Thus emerges the concept that “God blesseth trade” and the spiritual predisposition of the Old Testament, typical for Puritanism in general, is linked to the ancient Jewish belief about being rewarded for the virtues in this life. For this reason the book of Job became the most popular book of the Bible among Puritans, where Jehovah is so menacing and powerful but where the final reward for righteous man is defined to be given here, on the Earth (irrespectively, of course, that for us that ending of the book of Job constitutes a detail of secondary importance). [The Puritans] used to accentuate those texts of the Old Testament that dealt with formal honesty; there is no accident that it was often called English Hebraism, pointing at the Old Testament spirit of self-righteousness and sober legality.

The Jewish Messianic belief was powerfully reborn in Puritanism: The Anglo-Saxons are people chosen by God, called to govern above others for the sake of the salvation and enlightenment of the governed. This belief, among other things, constitutes the spiritual foundation of English mercantilism, characterized by shameless national selfishness. It was deeply characteristic for Cromwell’s thinking with its “sacred” [notions], and this enhanced national self-consciousness, whose roots go back to the time of the Reformation and especially to Puritanism, is specific to England in the present times. Nowadays, as Professor Schultze-Gawernitz has aptly noted:

The merchant behind the desk occupies the place to which God assigned exactly him, not someone else; he may feel himself a small but important wheel in the miraculous economic cosmos. The same merchant behind the desk serves

²¹ Tr. note: Translated from the author’s text.

simultaneously the interests of the British might; if he trade overseas, he lays the foundation for the British fleet to protect Protestantism.²²

Thus, Puritan asceticism turns out not only an economic but a political virtue as well.²³ A special role for the emergence of the capitalist spirit has been played by the fact that, stimulating the motivation to accumulate, it hastens [the expansion] of consumption. Allowing joy for pure aesthetic or sporting pleasure, Puritanism always puts a strict limit: It should not cost anything. The man is just a manager of goods given to him by God's mercy; he must, as the biblical wily slave, report every nickel. The thought of human responsibility for the property entrusted to him, to which he is subordinated as a servant-manager or as revenue-making machine (*Erwerbmaschine*), is laid upon the entire life with a cold burden: The more the property, the heavier the sense of responsibility to perpetuate it for the glory of God and to multiply it through ceaseless labor. Thus, little by little, the capitalist fetishism so well known to us now has been elaborated. Secular Protestant asceticism—to summarize all said above—acting with all its power against negligent use of property and restricting consumption, especially the use of luxury goods, liberates accumulation from traditional ethical barriers, develops ascetic ways of accumulation for the sake of the asceticism itself; not only legalizing the drive to enrich but directly interpreting it as a deed that pleases God, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. In this manner, Puritan asceticism is at the cradle of contemporary economic man, operating on the stock exchange and the market. The seventeenth-century epoch bequeathed its utilitarian inheritor first of all an unusually calm, we daresay, pharisaical, good conscience for money accumulation, if and only if it is made in the framework of the law. This is an emergence of a peculiar professional ethics. The strength of this religious asceticism has brought up the needs of the bourgeois entrepreneur—sober, conscientious, unusually hard working, attached to their labor as to a divine life objective, and feeling its responsibility before God and workers—the fathers of the contemporary proletariat.

²² L.c., p. 20.

²³ Even social democratic scholar Ed Bernstein admitted (referring to Quakers) that “der Asketismus ist buergerliche Tugend, namentlich vor dem Aufkommen der eigentlichen grossen Industrie, wo neue Kapitalien in der Tat oft genug durch Sparen gebildet sind” (Bernstein, *Sozialismus und demokratie in der grossen englischen Revolution*, 2-te Aufl., 1908, § 321). (“Ascetism is a *bourgeois* virtue namely for the emergence of the particularly large industry where new capital is accumulated in action, often utilizing savings.”)

“The Puritan wanted to become a professional,” concludes Weber, “we are forced to be one.” Now the economic cosmos does not need puncheons: It is enforced, even without specific inner motivation and justification; it compels to subject to that division of labor, to that *agiotage*, which often shapes like an uncontainable passion and sport. Still, the new colossal building stays upon old foundations.

“From the Puritan school,” notes Schultze-Gawernitz, “the Anglo-Saxon world had borrowed the sexual, national, and social discipline that counterweights the capitalist spirit. England has reached dominance because, among other things, it was superior before rivals in its clean family life, readiness to sacrifice for the love to the fatherland, and the sense of social responsibility. The superiority of the Anglo-Saxon type is based on capitalist, sexual, national, and social discipline” (1, pp. 46–47).

The awareness of a Puritan understanding of the entrepreneur’s duty has still not completely vanished for the contemporary representatives of Anglo-Saxon capitalism.²⁴

These are the general conclusions of the most contemporary scholars of the early history of capitalism. We could only regret that similar surveys are almost completely absent with regard to Russian economic life and to Russian industry in particular. The economism of the *Narodnichestvo* and Neomarxism had no predisposition for studying spiritual factors of economic development. We think that abundant material for such research is to be found in family archives and historic and statistics data. Surveys of Russian industrial history in relation to spiritual biographies and the everyday life and circumstances of pioneer entrepreneurs would have discovered the religious-ethical foundations of the psychology of Russian industry. It is well known that, for instance, there existed a very

²⁴ The famous American billionaire Carnegie (Andrew Carnegie, *Kaufmanns Herrschaft—Empire of Business* [Berlin, 1904], 93, 96–97) has formulated in his *credo* the duty to save: “Saving is the first most important duty. Parsimony is a necessary precondition of every progress. Without saving we would not have railways, channels, boats, telegraph, churches, newspapers, in short—anything that is great and expensive.... Man’s first duty is to build him a sufficient fortune and become independent, but that does not at all end his duties. His further responsibility is to do something about his neighbors in need; his duty is to do something good for the society he belongs to.... Aspiring to leave the world better than it was found means pursuing a noble life objective.”

close relationship between Russian capitalism and the *Starobriadnichestvo*,²⁵ to which many representatives of a series of the largest Russian companies used to belong. It should be of great interest to explicate the nature of this connection and, in general, to study the economic impacts of different faiths. We think it is possible, however, to establish even beforehand that the link between religious consciousness and economic activity should be related not only to certain doctrines but even more so to practical conclusions from religion and especially to what it required at a given time in history. What is important here is the religious spirit's way of penetrating life, its direct impact on—so to speak—the temperature of the religious-ascetic attitude to life. Of course, it is also important to take into account the external relations of a given faith: ostracism and persecution, selecting out the weak, bringing about strength, and the resolve of individual character that are to be found in all walks of life and in economic life, in particular, and the opposite: privileged external situation (the state legitimation of the church) weakens the degree of religion's impact of life, independently from doctrine, at least in terms of the intensity, if not the extensity of the religious factor. It would be of special interest to reveal the economic potential of Orthodox Christianity, but this would require a broad religious-philosophical and historic exercise, far beyond the limits of this essay. Being radically different from Puritanism and Protestantism in general, in the aspect of the discipline of docility and “walking under God” (as well as dogmatically the same *Starobriadnichestvo*) poses powerful means of nurturing and educating a sense of personal responsibility and duty that is so essential to economic activity as well as for all other types of service to society. If nowadays the influence of the religious discipline of Orthodoxy on the economic life of the Russian people is less visible and is often weaker than that of the dissident faiths, it is merely evidence of the regrettable decline of the Orthodox faith at this particular moment of history. (This is the fate, in part, of all “broad churches” with their multiple and colorful membership compared to relatively closed but inspired sects.)

In our time, there is, as, by the way, there always is, a struggle between two types of attitudes toward the world in general and economic life in particular: the mechanistic-utilitarian and the religious. In the first case, the priority is

²⁵ Tr. note: The term literally means “Adherers-to-the-Old-rite,” a colorful, secular, and religious multi-sectarian movement of *Stariobriodtsi* (old Ritualists) and *Staroviertsy* (old Believers), known also as *Raskolniks* (those who split), who opposed standardization of holy books and mistagogy after the synodal reforms of 1654 and later denounced Peter the Great's (1689–1725) move to substitute the Holy Synod and make himself the head of Church authority.

given to different interests and their struggle, while the element of recognition of duties, of social service, is overshadowed. In the second case, the recognition of duties is highlighted and an exact understanding of social life is established as a system of mutual obligations. In the nineteenth century, these worldviews found sharp and distinguished expression in the works of different social thinkers, in different socioeconomic systems. The nineteenth century has created, on one hand, Bentham, R. Owen and Marx, but along with them it has given Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, Kinsley, Tolstoy, Vl. Solovyov... And in particular, on the subject of economic life and entrepreneurship activity along with class struggle as a universal, all-embracing principle, we find the teaching of class responsibilities and class service that are expressed particularly clearly in the ideas of Carlyle and Ruskin on “captains of industry.”²⁶ In these two worldviews, in struggle and in real life—to the extent ideas in general, public opinion, and general spiritual climate exercise an impact on human individuals—a dominance

²⁶ “The Leaders of Industry, if Industry is ever to be led, are virtually the Captains of the World; if there be no nobleness in them, there will never be an Aristocracy more.... Let the Captains of Industry retire into their own hearts, and ask solemnly, If there is nothing but vulturous hunger, for fine wines, valet reputation and gilt carriages, discoverable there?... No Working World, any more than a Fighting World, can be led on without a noble Chivalry of Work, and laws and fixed rules which follow out of that. Your gallant battle-hosts and work-hosts, as the others did, will need to be made loyally yours; they must and will be regulated, methodically secured in their just share of conquest under you; joined with you in veritable brotherhood, sonhood, by quite other and deeper ties than those of temporary day’s wages! How would mere redcoated regiments, to say nothing of chivalries, fight for you, if you could discharge them on the evening of the battle, on payment of the stipulated shillings?... Look around you. Your world-hosts are all in mutiny, in confusion, destitution; on the eve of fiery wreck and madness! They will not march farther for you, on the sixpence a day and supply-and-demand principle: they will not; nor ought they, nor can they. Ye shall reduce them to order, begin reducing them. To order, to just subordination; noble loyalty in return for noble guidance.... Not as a bewildered bewildering mob; but as a firm regimented mass, with real captains over them, will these men march any more. All human interests, combined human endeavors, and social growths in this world, have, at a certain stage of their development, required organizing: and Work, the grandest of human interests, does now require it. God knows, the task will be hard: but no noble task was ever easy.” (Tr. note: Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* [New York, 1843], 149–52. The author quotes a Russian translation by N. Gorbov.) For an objective analysis required for an industrial leadership, to be “capitalist entrepreneur”—see Werner Sombart, *Der Kapitalistische Unternehmer*, especially chapter 8 (Arch. F. S. u. Socialpol., 29, 3, November-Heft, 1909).

of one or another impacts economic life as well. The dominance of Utilitarianism and decline of personality threaten to cut back economic development, as the worries go with regard to England and even more so regarding France with its economic recession.²⁷ The national economy requires the spiritual health of the nation. In Russian society, “the productive forces” (a phrase so often repeated by the Marxist) are not sufficiently understood by the intelligentsia development as a peculiar religious-ethic objective or as a type of social service. In views on economic life, especially regarding the ways of industrial development, extreme Benthamism in one form or another but most often of a Marxist kind dominates; the fiction of economic man is accepted without analysis or criticism. Predominant attention is focused on the element of redistribution understood as an outcome of competition and class struggle. Relatively lesser acknowledgement is received by the development of the productive forces as a creative task—the growth of the entire national economy as a joint effort of diverse individuals’ wills.

This attitude has been rather typically expressed in the formulation and the solution of the issues related to agrarian reform. The agrarian question, as it is obvious from the statistical and economic data, is first of all a question of developing productive forces, and only then comes the secondary question of the redistribution of land ownership. Meanwhile, not so long ago, in our public consciousness, the issue became one of blind reallocation of the boundaries and elimination of private land ownership. The development of the productive forces and the success of the productive labor in general, irrespectively of the entire Socialist ovation, are far from sufficiently well perceived in social consciousness and are received with hubris and disdain. Often in our society, the pursuit of productive development and the very creative initiative are being interpreted exclusively from the prism of class Benthamism, as “bourgeoisness,” a drive for a lucre; and, to the opposite, the intelligentsia professionals, irrespectively of their high dependence on industry and on “capital” (advocateship, literature, technology) are usually estimated by a completely different measure as something superior, full of ideal, and dignified. The development of the new divisions of labor in the consciousness of our society looks like a far inferior activity than that of all possible intelligentsia professions. This prejudice has real sinister consequences; the dominance of such assessment holds morally hostage the representatives of industry and demoralizes and degrades them in public opinion by presentencing them as if *a priori* releasing the industrial leaders of moral responsibility and boycotting them ethically and socially. In this way, the national and popular-economic whole is hopelessly split into different social classes, divided by impen-

²⁷ See on this topic Schultze-Gawernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*.

etrable fences. We must understand that the fate of our industry as well as of our agriculture, the productive forces development in general for which capital is a necessary means, is a vital, all-people cause in the interest of the entire nation. With regard to workmen, Benthamism (the original one, and its later variety, Marxism) is deeply inappropriate as a means of public education. Although the capitalist economy is inextricably related to the antagonism of the social classes, which represent different sides and interests of production—it is dangerous and harmful to reduce all social relations only to this antagonism and to point at just centrifugal and forget about centripetal forces. Every class has its own place in the production process, its own duties and its own social responsibility from which it cannot—must not—liberate itself in the name of its own interests. What nurtures citizenship is not awareness of one's interests, but awareness of social duties. Benthamism, in its pedagogical significance if its influence on working masses deepens, becomes, in pure economic sense, a factor of decomposition and harm, as long as it has an impact on the attitude of a person toward personal duties, as long as it destroys the moral discipline that constitutes a foundation for every professional labor; mere awareness of interests is insufficient ground for individual discipline. Meanwhile, in such situations, the requirements on the individual as a "factor of production" do not improve at all. The social progress of our times is intrinsically linked to development of the personality and, therefore, to the improvement of personal responsibility and self-discipline. The political economy denotes as transition from an economy of low wages to an economy of high wages, in other words, the enhancement of productivity and intensity of labor that economically justifies wage increases, is inseparably linked to the self-discipline of the representatives of labor. It is impossible to achieve such a discipline solely on the ground of naked interests: It presupposes recognition of superior ethical and eventually religious values, of moral responsibilities in the area of professional labor. Of course, in immediate life experience (but not in the Bentham's theory that deletes all peculiarities of living human individuals) the differences between good-conscientious and ill-conscientious labor, a fit and unfit worker is perfectly distinguishable in any sector of labor. Benthamism seeks to enhance awareness of peculiar interests—completely legitimate, natural, and resolvable when class antagonism exists—preaching this antagonism with a peculiar ardor. When this awareness of interests crosses the limits of its legitimacy and becomes the exclusive principle of explanation, as elaborated by Benthamism, it becomes a factor that diminishes the moral virtues of labor representatives, retards the development of productive forces, and amplifies social enmity, having already lost its creative strength. Education of individuals in Benthamism's spirit, the cult of interests, irrespectively of workers of capitalism, is wrong even

from a Socialist viewpoint. Socialism, if it aspires to become a genuine, superior form of economy without losing what has been already accomplished, and to be capable of furthering productive forces, should be even more in disagreement with Benthamism. On the contrary, this form requires such a level of personal responsibility and self-discipline that it cannot be attained in the name of just personal interests but presupposes superior ethical culture.

Historical research, liberating one's thinking from prejudice and one-sidedness, reveals more and more often the psychological roots of economic activity and clarifies the economic meaning of religious foundations, determining the living human soul. This discussed, particular example of the origins of the capitalist spirit helps most clearly to observe to what extent is the psychological origin of economic man, which political economy assumes as something simple, elementary, and indivisible. The economic man specter disappears in the light of historical research. We need to liberate ourselves of many ideological phantoms, including that of economic man. It must be understood that economic activity could constitute a social service and be an execution of a moral duty. Only under such an attitude and when public education adheres to this understanding, will a beneficial spiritual climate be created for the development of production and reforms for redistribution for economic and social progress. One rarely meets nowadays a strong will and sharp eyes in our society. Thanks to this low quality of human personalities, along, of course, with other external reasons, a slow but firm and inevitable (if all remains unchanged) economic invasion of Russia by foreigners is taking place. In order to enhance our standing in this course of intense economic competition we need, among other conditions, a different assessment of economic activity, not the intelligentsia's disrespect and master's leniency toward this prose of life. For the Russian resurrection, we also need a national self-education that includes as a practical conclusion a sounder, soberer and—let me add—more honest attitude toward the issue of the development of productive forces. It seems there is a vivid social interest in economic affairs. The economic needs of Russia are so evident and urgent that they do not need further explanation. Nevertheless, however, appropriate analysis of economic activity and understanding of the development of productive forces as a universal cause are still at unsatisfactory levels. Public opinion belongs to the [group] of imponderable spiritual factors of historical and economic life development; and especially if we compare it with the visible influence of the iron economic mechanism of the world market, we could arrive at complete denial and absolute disregard of public opinion. Even contemporary natural science admits that imponderable forces are sometimes mightier [than other forces]. As similarly imponderable but real and mighty factors of economic development serve public

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opinion, those sets of beliefs and convictions lead the opinion. National economy is not only a mechanism but also a robust activity of human personalities; social life is not only a class struggle but a complicated system of mutual duties of these classes. If a person, acting as a factor of economic development, evolves under the defining influence of moral and religious convictions, then one or another form of religious self-determination of the individual and, in general, religion, affecting all walks, must belong to the list of major factors of national economic development. This is why while pushing the goal of Russia's economic invigoration and renewal, one must not forget the spiritual prerequisites, namely, about the elaboration of economic psychology, which may emerge only through social self-education.