Nikolai Aleksandrovich Rozhkov
(1868-1927): historian and revolutionary

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Chapter Three

Rozhkov's Interpretation of Kiev Rus':
Its Economic Basis
P.N. Miliukov once said of Kliuchevskii that his mind belonged to the Westernizers and his heart to the Slavophiles.\(^1\) It may be said of Rozhkov that both his mind and heart belonged to the Westernizers. He was first and foremost a zapadnik. Rozhkov believed that Russian society developed in the same way that western European society developed. In fact, all societies developed according to the western European model of development. Rozhkov did not deny that Russia was different from the west, but he explained this in terms of its backwardness rather than its uniqueness.\(^2\) Therefore, Rozhkov's study of Russian social development was an attempt to explain why Russia was historically less developed than western Europe.

As Riasanovsky has pointed out, the origin and development of Kiev Rus' is "exceedingly complex and controversial. No earlier chapter of Russian history presents the same number and variety of difficulties".\(^3\) The next two chapters will analyse Rozhkov's interpretation of Kiev Rus'. They will demonstrate that Rozhkov had a thorough understanding of the sources and was alert to the historical debates of the time. These chapters will also show that Rozhkov was a unilinear evolutionist for whom causality meant additive

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2. N.A. Rozhkov, Obzor' russkoi istorii s sotsiologicheskoi tochki zrenia, Chast' I (Moscow, 1905), p. 166.
sequence. Rozhkov was a determinist who believed that every aspect of society could be explained by its direct causal relationship with the economic structure.

Like Comte before him, Rozhkov maintained that sociology is the science of society and to be scientific meant accepting two fundamental explanatory principles of Newtonian mechanics—causality and the continuity of motion. Armed with the basic philosophical premises of Comtian "social physics", Rozhkov attempted to explain historical development. For Rozhkov, explaining historical development meant sifting through the evidence, uncovering and classifying the basic phenomena which make up social life, discovering the pattern of interaction between phenomena, deciding which phenomenon was the basic determinant of this pattern, constructing generalisations and formulating the laws that he believed explained social order and progress.

Elton has written that few practicing historians would fall victim to the search for scientific laws for "the experience of research is enough to cure such ambitions".4 In Rozhkov's case, empirical research had just the opposite effect. The more research Rozhkov performed, the grander became his law-finding project. In his efforts to extract the significant from the ephemeral, order from disorder and produce

comprehensible works of scholarship that summarised vast amounts of material Rozhkov produced a number of bold and challenging hypotheses. The search for laws of history inspired Rozhkov to analyse a vast amount of primary material, work that even Rozhkov's critics acknowledge proved invaluable to their own efforts to explain the course of Russian history. To understand Rozhkov, one needs to take account of his belief in historical progress and his conviction that there was a unilinear path of social development.

In a long essay criticising Comte's sociology, Lappo-Danilevskii pointed out that Comte built his sociology upon a teleological basis. The French thinker considered the "positive stage" to be the ultimate goal of social evolution. As Vucinich correctly wrote:

The theological and metaphysical stages were merely transitory phases of a gradual but inexorable affirmation of the positive stage. The ideal of positive society led Comte to shift the focus of his sociological analysis from causal explanations to teleological evaluations. The teleological element, in turn, led him to define social progress as a process of moral advancement and to place a veil of ontological obscurity around the three-stage intellectual progress.

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In his own work, Rozhkov differed from Comte in that he provided an empirical base for his theory of social development. Rozhkov, however, had a mechanistic materialist view of the universe and he used the principles of Newtonian mechanics to produce a deterministic view of human history.

Before 1905, Rozhkov did not have a substitute concept for Comte’s “positive stage”. He believed in the progressive nature of social development and progress meant the inevitable movement of all societies towards a more civilised stage of social development. Rozhkov was so convinced of this belief that he does not question the notion of progress in any of his many works. For Rozhkov, the movement of society towards a more civilised stage of social evolution was inevitable. After 1905, he believed socialism would represent the most civilised stage of social development. Determinism is a conspicuous feature in all of Rozhkov’s works. Instead of being the subject of history, humans are reduced to passive objects at the mercy of unrelenting external forces that Rozhkov believed could be explained by a cast-iron system of laws.

There are several reasons why the historical period of Kiev Rus’ was chosen as the case study to analyse how Rozhkov interpreted the past. Because Rozhkov believed that Kiev Rus’ was the first period of Russian history and was therefore a less complex society than those that followed it, this portion of
Rozhkov's history can be adequately examined within the scope of the thesis. Furthermore, without an understanding of Rozhkov's interpretation of Kiev Rus', it is difficult to comprehend his interpretation of Russian historical development generally. According to Rozhkov's theory of history, the way the first period is interpreted determines the direction and pattern of all subsequent periods.

Rozhkov's analysis of any historical phenomenon always began with a brief discussion of natural phenomena. This was quickly followed by a detailed examination of economic factors. Believing that earlier civilisations are characterised by the dominance of the influence of nature—especially climate—on humans, he outlined those factors of nature that influence the organisation of society.

In this chapter, I will argue that Rozhkov's generalisations were consistent with the evidence he provided and that the laws he subsequently formulated proved to be very good, simple summaries of extremely complex material. Rozhkov succeeded in providing an empirical base for his general theory of society. Despite this achievement, Rozhkov failed to explore adequately the notion of historical facts and their relationship to sociological theory. In this shortcoming, Rozhkov was not alone. Generally speaking, positivists believed that historical facts, like scientific facts, were unquestionable. Facts were like building blocks of
knowledge — solid and certain. They could be quarried from the sources and used to “scheme the edifice” of history.7 Today both natural and social scientists and historians would agree “that their methods are not at all like the construction of edifices out of blocks of solid facts”.8 As Stanford simply put it: “Both history and science are more like the reading of an obscure text or the solving of a puzzle, where clues and hypotheses do and undo each other as the scholar gradually gropes towards a solution”.9

Rozhkov began his study of Kiev Rus’ by discussing the geography and population of the East-European plain in the VI-XII centuries. Natural phenomena constituted the most general category in his positivist scheme and therefore lay at the basis of his interpretation of society.10 A short, straightforward and simple description of the physical features of Kiev Rus’ was followed by a longer discussion of the colonization and settlement patterns of the area. Following the work of Kliuchevskii, which showed most clearly the vigorous colonisation of the Russian Slavs, Rozhkov concluded that by the XII century the most distinguishing features of the history of the Russian population were:

10 See: Figure 5.1 of this thesis.
firstly, the settling of the eastern Slavs on the plain and, secondly, the migration of the various groups of people from one part of the country to another; for example, the migration of the Polianians and Severians to Galicia and Volyn', on the one hand, and to the basins of the Oka and Upper Volga, on the other.\textsuperscript{11}

Rozhkov pointed out that the favourable topography of the Eastern European plain enabled the Slavs to colonise the huge areas relatively easily and quickly. This colonization process was assisted by other factors: the “uniformity” of a continental climate that allowed the settlers to adapt to the new climatic conditions without much difficulty;\textsuperscript{12} the many deep and wide rivers that flowed in all directions and served as excellent means of transport and communication;\textsuperscript{13} the types of soils found in the area\textsuperscript{14} and the botanical and zoological wealth of the region which provided the settlers with the goods needed to survive.\textsuperscript{15}

Rozhkov believed that nature played a significant but passive role in the development of society. According to Rozhkov, natural phenomena assist the colonisation process. The topography, climate, soil, flora and fauna of the region are “supporting conditions for the process of colonisation”.\textsuperscript{16} In other words,
Rozhkov believed that natural factors created the possibility for settlement [*rasselenie*] and migration [*pereselenie*]. However, natural factors were not necessary causes of the changes to the distribution of the population along the plain. He concluded by declaring natural factors to be a “passive influence” [*passivnoe vliianie*] on the process of colonisation. Led by the belief in the supremacy of science over nature, Rozhkov searched elsewhere for the “moving force” or the “active influence” of social development.\(^\text{17}\)

The distinction that Rozhkov made between active and passive causes was directly related to his understanding of determinism. In his opinion, natural phenomena cannot be active causes because they do not necessarily determine the type of society that flourishes in a particular region. As Rozhkov demonstrated, colonisation often took place in direct contradiction to the prevailing natural conditions. In the XII century, for example, the region around the river Oka and the upper Volga was settled even though its sandy loam was less fertile than the rich black earth found in the regions along the Dnepr river.\(^\text{18}\) Another example which Rozhkov gave was that of the II’menskie Slavs who colonised the northern region of Kiev Rus’ despite the fact that the climate in this part of the world was much harsher than that found elsewhere in the

\(^{17}\) *Ibid.*

An active cause [aktivnaia prichina] for Rozhkov meant a necessary cause. In his desire to extract the sequence of events, he imparted an anthropomorphic quality to the concept of an active cause and, in so doing, compounded the problems associated with the search for necessary causes in history.20

Having examined briefly the natural factors that he believed influenced the development of Russia, Rozhkov went on to consider economic factors. In his opinion, the various tribes that inhabited the Kiev Rus' region were involved in extracting the products that were available in the abundant primeval forests and rivers. The stock-breeding that was practised was simple and only required locating new pastures for the herd. Similarly, the little agriculture that was practised was very primitive and involved breaking up virgin soil.

Rozhkov came to the conclusion that an "extractive industry" [dobyvaiushchaia promyshlennost'] and stock-rearing [skotovodstvo] predominated in Kiev Rus'.21 He believed that stock-rearing was more developed in the Kiev Rus' period than agriculture because "the economic nature of primitive stock-rearing was closer to the extractive industries than it was to agriculture".22 He argued that "like the

19 Ibid.
20 Stanford, op.cit., pp. 197-204.
22 Ibid., p. 10.
extractive industries, stock-rearing required very little effort or attention from individuals".\(^{23}\) According to Rozhkov, the "most basic economic requirement for the primitive producer was to be able to be nomadic \([\text{kochevat'}]\), that is, to be able to go from place to place".\(^{24}\) Individuals had to chase wild animals and locate forest bees for the extractive industries. They also had to find fresh pastures for the stock.\(^{25}\) He believed that the products of "extractive industries" were obtained through "the simple exploitation of the free forces of nature and required very little special effort".\(^{26}\) The main activities of the so-called extractive industries were hunting or trapping, fowling, bee-keeping, fishing and stock-rearing.\(^{27}\)

Rozhkov was not the first to contend that the population of Kiev Rus' consisted essentially of non-agricultural peoples. Kliuchevskii, the most outstanding representative of the so-called "traditional" school, argued the case that foreign trade in the products of extractive industries was the defining feature of the economy of Kiev Rus' and was the major factor in the development of the Kievan state.\(^{28}\) He wrote: "In the XI

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 19-21.
\(^{26}\) Rozhkov, *Obzor*, Chast' I, p. 16.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 19-21.
century, the mass of the population was concentrated in the Dnepr black-earth [chernozem] region and its inhabitants "mainly traded forest products and the products of other industries".29

It was Kliuchevskii's opinion that the majority of the population were not farmers but found their livelihood in the forests as hunters, fishermen and beekeepers. More importantly, he contended that it was the development of trade in the non-agricultural products that came from the forests that led to the growth of markets and towns.30 Rozhkov's interpretation of Kiev Rus' was greatly influenced by Kliuchevskii's interpretation of this period in history and, as such, had much in common with it.31 Similarities connect both interpretations not only because they used the same primary sources but because Rozhkov took Kliuchevskii's theory of the importance of trade as a starting point and re-evaluated and re-interpreted the evidence that was available.

Following Kliuchevskii, Rozhkov believed that foreign trade was an important influence on Russian history. He agreed with Kliuchevskii's thesis that it was

30 Stokes, op.cit., pp. 55-56.
probably foreign trade that first attracted the Varangians to Russia. He also believed that trade contributed to the creation of fortified towns, led to the formation of social classes and gave rise to landownership. But Rozhkov was at variance with his mentor, Kliuchevskii, on the importance of foreign trade in the earlier part of the Kievan period. The disagreement was a significant one because it gave rise to the description of Kiev Rus' for which Rozhkov is primarily remembered. As Rozhkov wrote in Town and Village: "It would be a huge mistake to conclude that the political structure of Kiev Rus' arose from foreign trade, which at the time was a secondary economic factor". In support of this statement, Rozhkov cited the important document De administrando imperio compiled by Constantine Bagrianorodnyi (Porphyrogenitus) in the middle of the tenth century. Rozhkov correctly pointed out that De administrando imperio contains plenty of evidence which "warns against an exaggerated notion of the significance of foreign trade in the economic life of Kiev Rus".

Rozhkov believed that Kiev Rus' was "predominantly" a society founded on the activities of extractive industries. He believed extractive

32 Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnia, pp. 18-22.
33 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
35 Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnia, p. 11.
36 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast' I, p. 16.
industries predominated in two important senses: firstly, the bulk of the population was involved in the activities of extractive industries and secondly, the products of extractive industries provided the means by which the Kiev Rus’ ruling class was able to trade, thereby expanding its wealth.\textsuperscript{37} For Rozhkov, it was essential that he prove that extractive industries comprised the predominant economic branch in Kiev Rus’.

In an effort to prove his highly contentious notion that Kiev Rus’ was predominantly a society based on the activities of extractive industries, Rozhkov turned to the primary sources. There was something of the meticulous accountant in the manner in which Rozhkov studied the detail of economic transactions in the early years of Kiev Rus’. In Rozhkov’s opinion, the three brothers named Kii, Shchek and Khoriv, mentioned in the legend recorded in the \textit{Primary Chronicle}, were trappers. Furthermore, this source also points out that the Severiane tribe paid tribute to the Khazars in the form of one squirrel skin per homestead and that after conquering the Drevliane in 883 Oleg set the tribute at one black marten per homestead. Rozhkov also pointed out that in the \textit{Primary Chronicle} there are references to Prince Igor and Princess Olga giving Byzantine dignitaries valuable gifts of furs. Princess Olga is also mentioned as setting up traps for hunting wild beasts

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.} See also: Rozhkov, \textit{Gorod i derevnia}, p. 12.
[lovishcha] in the lands of the Drevliane and Novgorod and as setting up nets for fowling [perevesishcha] along the Dnepr and Desna rivers. There was plenty of evidence to show that furs were one of the main riches of Kiev Rus'.

Rozhkov's knowledge of languages, his eye for historical detail and his determination to find documentary evidence to support his theory that Kiev Rus' was a society based on extractive industries led him to the uncovering of an impressive mass of primary material. His use of the information contained in both the Short and Expanded Versions of Russkaia Pravda

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40 During the reign of laroslav the Wise (1015-1054), the first Russian code of laws was compiled. This brief document is based upon the customary law and contains mainly norms of penal law. laroslav's Pravda, the Pravda of his sons and a number of additional ordinances tending to reinforce princely authority that were made some twenty years after the death of laroslav, are known as the Short Version of the Pravda. In the course of the twelfth century the whole code was considerably enlarged and revised. This is the so-called Expanded Version of the Pravda which, as Vernadsky stated, "served as an intermediary link between the rude and primitive code of laroslav and the much more elaborate 'charters' of the city-republics of Pskov and Novgorod of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries". See: Medieval Russian Laws, translated by G. Vernadsky (New York: Octagon Books, 1979), p. 5. Vernadsky's introduction (pp. 3-25) provides a good general explanation of the origins of Russkaia Pravda or The Russian Law. A more recent discussion may be found in the
and his examination of Greek and Arab sources added even more value to his work. Sadly for Rozhkov's reputation, his account of Kiev Rus' fell out of favour in the Soviet period when historians like Boris Grekov, who considered early Kiev Rus' to be less backward and more agricultural, held sway.\textsuperscript{41} But Grekov's triumph was by no means simply a victory of superior arguments. Grekov's popularity and Rozhkov's unpopularity were at least as much a product of the former's more "patriotic" account of early Russian history as it was of any failure on the part of Rozhkov to prove his case. As even the most recent scholarship concerning Kiev Rus' accepts, there is not yet a definitive answer to the question of the nature of the early Kievan economy.\textsuperscript{42} Rozhkov advanced a case supported by primary evidence. Although he spawned only one notable supporter,\textsuperscript{43} Rozhkov's claim that extractive industries were of greater importance to the early Kievan economy than agriculture or trade remains plausible.

Rozhkov went to great lengths in his attempt to prove that extractive industries comprised the

\footnotesize{introduction and foreword to Zakonodatel'stvo drevnei rusi, Vol. 1 in O.I. Chistiakov (ed.), Rossiskoe zakonodatel'stvo X-XX vekov v deviaty tomakh (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia Literatura, 1984), pp. 5-46.}

\textsuperscript{41} See: B.D. Grekov, Kul'tura kievskoi rusi (Moscow: Izdатel'stvo literature na inostrannykh iazykah, 1947).


\textsuperscript{43} See: I.la Froianov, Kievshaia Rus': Ocherki sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii (Leningrad, 1974) and I.la Froianov, Kievshaia Rus': Ocherki sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Leningrad, 1980).}
predominant economic way of life in the Kiev Rus' period. It is not surprising therefore that all earlier major studies of Kiev Rus' cited his evidence and theory.⁴⁴ Even Rozhkov’s opponent, Grekov, was forced to acknowledge that Rozhkov built up an “arsenal of documentary evidence and this compels us to take a closer look at his arguments”.⁴⁵

Indeed, Rozhkov overwhelms the reader with the volume of material pertaining to hunting. He delights in bringing to the reader’s attention the fact that in the extended version of Russkaia Pravda there are references to the hunting of beavers and a list of the various punishments given to people who damage objects and goods used in the hunting of animals.⁴⁶ Rozhkov also cited many examples of the value that hunting and the products of hunting had for the church. He alerted his readers to the fact that in the church ordinance of 1135, given by Vsevolod who was the Prince of Novgorod, hunting is mentioned as well as the rich lands owned by the archbishop that enabled him to possess a large number of furs.⁴⁷ In the so-called Kirik’s Queries [Voprosy Kirika] mention is made of catching birds with snares.⁴⁸ Rozhkov also pointed out the fact that Varlaam Khutynskii donated his fowling

⁴⁴ See: L.K. Goetz, Das russiche Recht, Volumes I-IV (Stuttgart, 1910-1915); Vernadsky, op.cit. and Grekov, op.cit.
⁴⁵ Grekov, op.cit., p. 47.
⁴⁶ Ibid.
⁴⁷ Ibid.
⁴⁸ See: Vernadsky, Kievan Russia, p. 207.
grounds to the monastery he founded in Novgorod. Finally, Rozhkov cited the fact that according to the charter issued by Prince Rostislav Mstislavich of Smolensk, the bishop of the same city received from the inhabitants of his episcopacy furs and had the services of a gamekeeper [teterevnik].

Rozhkov was no less industrious in uncovering material in support of his claim that the activities of apiculture and fishing were integral to the economy of Kiev Rus'. Rozhkov strove valiantly to marshall such evidence to prove his principal contention that Kiev Rus' was a society based on the activities of extractive industries and stock-rearing. Rozhkov noted that apiculture [pchelovodstvo] or bortnichestvo as it was more commonly referred to in Kiev Rus' times, was mentioned quite frequently in the documentary sources of the time. He wrote that among the gifts that Igor and Olga presented to the Greeks in the tenth century was wax [vosk] and that wax was held in great quantity by the rulers of Kiev Rus'. Rozhkov made extensive use of the Primary Chronicle as it showed that Russia was rich not only in furs but also honey and wax.

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50 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast' I, p. 18.

51 Apiculture was called bortnichestvo because the hollow trees that the bees used to build their hives in were known as borti. It was a primitive and largely natural method. As Vernadsky indicated, "the hollow [bort'] might be natural but mostly they were specially cut in the trunk for the purpose. The trunk was then marked with the apiculturist's mark [znamia]". See: Vernadsky, Kievan Russia, p. 106.

52 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast' I, p. 18.
Rozhkov found confirmation of his thesis about the importance of apiculture in the works of Arab writers. According to Ibn-Khaukal', "honey was one of Russia's most important exports".53 Another tenth-century Arab writer by the name of Ibn-Dasta wrote that Russians were very involved in apiculture. During the Kiev Rus' period, princes had special cellars [medushi] with huge reserves of honey. Rozhkov cites the case of a cellar in Putivl in which 500 berkovets of honey were stored.54 As a master of detail, Rozhkov compiled many other interesting examples.55

Similarly, Rozhkov was able to demonstrate that fishing was an important extractive industry activity in Kiev Rus'. To support this claim, Rozhkov cited not only the evidence that existed in documentary sources but also produced archaeological evidence. In his opinion, archaeological excavations had provided evidence of a lively fishing industry in Kiev Rus'. Remnants of fish bones, fishing hooks, fishing rods, harpoons and plummets for fishing nets have been found. Rozhkov claimed that the agreement between Igor and the Greeks showed that fishing was allowed at the mouth of the Dnepr and the prince of Kiev undertook not to interfere with Chersonite fisheries in this area.56 Using the

53 Ibid.
54 At that time, 1 berkovet was equal to 10 puds and 1 pud was the equivalent of 16.38 kilos or 36.113 English pounds. Therefore 500 berkovets is the equivalent of 81,900 kilos of honey. See: Pushkarev, op.cit., pp. 3, 109 and 110.
55 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast' I, p. 18. See also: Vernadsky, Kievan Russia, op.cit., p. 106.
56 Ibid. See also: Obolensky, op.cit., p. 247.
extended and shortened versions of *Russkaia Pravda*, Rozhkov provided numerous other illustrations. These include the fact that a bloodwite collector [*virnik*] and his assistants collected fish from the population during Lent;\textsuperscript{57} in the second half of the twelfth century, the bishop of Smolensk received from Prince Rostislaw a fishery in Toropets; at this time too, Saint Antonii Rimlianin bought a fishery on the Volkhov river and Varlaam Khutynskii gave a fishery to the monastery he founded.\textsuperscript{58}

Rozhkov foresaw the objection that he had underestimated the role played by the other branches of Kiev Rus' economy. He wrote that he had:

purposely dwelled at such length on the documentary evidence of the idea that extractive industries played a paramount, determining role in the economic life of the Kievan period of Russian history: indeed many researchers who underestimate this role are inclined to ascribe to another branch of production the same significance and sometimes even a greater significance.\textsuperscript{59}

In particular, Rozhkov had in mind the importance some researchers had ascribed to agriculture. He wrote that these researchers believed that "the Eastern Slavs were already a completely agricultural people in the VII and VIII centuries" and that "agriculture was the basis of

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. See also: Tikhomirov, *op.cit.*, Pt. 1, pp. 188 and 199.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 19.
their occupation". Rozhkov expressed his disagreement with this argument by writing that "the existence of agriculture and its predominance were not one and the same thing".

It was Rozhkov's view that agriculture became a predominant form of production only in the twelfth century. He never denied that agriculture was important to the Kiev Rus' population. For instance, he acknowledged that "the Russians had no need for imported grain [khleb] because they had enough of their own". Although he was convinced of the predominance of extractive industries, he was well aware of the evidence that demonstrated that Kiev Rus' society was involved in "agricultural pursuits". Rozhkov wrote: "Indeed, in the sources of the IX, X, XI and XII centuries there is no shortage of evidence pointing to the agricultural pursuits of the population".

With his usual thoroughness, Rozhkov presented to the reader all kinds of evidence relating to the existence of agriculture in Kiev Rus'. Rozhkov was obviously fascinated by the evidence and even his most outspoken critics were impressed by the wealth of detail and erudition contained in his work. Yet the same cannot be said about the principles governing his overall

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60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid. Later in Russkaia istoriia, Vol. 1, Rozhkov wrote about the "most splendid" and "huge success" of agricultural development. See p. 150.
view of the Kiev Rus' period. It is at the level of large-scale theory that weaknesses become apparent in Rozhkov's work.

Despite all the evidence that Rozhkov presented, he failed to demonstrate the "predominance" of extractive industries. Rozhkov only succeeded in showing that extractive industries were an important part of the lives of ordinary people in Kiev Rus' and that the products of the extractive industries were important trade items. As a consequence, the ruling elite of Kievan society came to extract from the population the products of the extractive industries that provided the basis of their wealth. As for agriculture, Rozhkov argued that in the major primary sources grain is not even mentioned among the goods which comprised Rus's main wealth and so cannot be considered very important. As Grekov has pointed out, such an argument was not conclusive evidence to prove that agriculture was much less important than the extractive industries.64

Rozhkov's views did represent an important advance upon Kliuchevskii's in at least one important respect. Rozhkov made it clear that a distinction had to be drawn between the activities of the Kiev Rus' elite and the mass of the population. Being interested in sociology, Rozhkov examined the economic pursuits of the population as a whole and this led him to some very

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64 Grekov, op.cit., p. 69.
interesting observations about the Kiev Rus' population. According to Rozhkov, the "mass of the population did not participate in trade". They produced the goods that formed the basis of trade but they did not sell or use these goods as barter. These goods were handed over in the form of tribute [dan'] to a relatively small group within the Kiev Rus' society which was directly involved in trade. This elite group consisted of princes, druzhiny and affluent urban dwellers.

Using Constantine Bagrianorodnyi's (Porphyrogenitus') De administrando imperio, Rozhkov argued that trade was based on the products of extractive industries and was the main economic activity of an elite group of people. Rozhkov spent a lot of time examining the trading activities of the prince and his retinue. Rozhkov argued that the documentary evidence showed how the prince and his druzhina would leave Kiev and set out for the collection of the tribute as soon as winter approached. The prince visited all the territories of the tribes paying tribute to Rus' and he was thus occupied for the entire winter. In spring the prince with his druzhina would return to Kiev where boats, that had been prepared in his absence, would be waiting for him. The prince and his retinue bought these boats once they returned from their tribute-collecting.

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65 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast' I, p. 24.
66 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
67 Ibid.
winter expeditions \([\text{poliudie}]^{68}\). The prince’s druzhina rigged and loaded their goods onto the boats and prepared themselves for the long journey to Constantinople. This journey usually began around the month of June.

In Rozhkov’s opinion, trade was of importance only to an elite group. Rozhkov repeatedly stressed the fact that Kiev Rus’ was a natural economy in which money played a very minor role. Rozhkov argued that trade was used by the prince and his retinue to obtain goods that were not essential for daily existence. He argued that in reality trade did not even “affect the vital needs of the upper classes”\(^{69}\). He claimed that the upper classes obtained everything that was essential for living, just as the rest of the population did, from nature. The upper classes only sent surplus goods to the foreign market and there they bartered only for luxury goods such as silken fabrics, wines and expensive weapons. As such, argued Rozhkov, trade was not even a necessary component of the economy. In other words, extractive industries would have continued irrespective of trade\(^{70}\). As Rozhkov emphasised:

\(^{68}\) Pushkarev, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 91. Boris Rybakov has a very good discussion of the importance of tribute collection or \(\text{poliudie}\), as it is referred to in Russian, in his study entitled \textit{Kievan Rus} (Moscow: Progress Publishers, English translation, 1989), pp. 81-118. Other excellent accounts of this are provided by G. Jones, \textit{A History of the Vikings} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) and Obolensky, \textit{op.cit.}

\(^{69}\) Rozhkov, \textit{Obzor, Chast’ I}, p. 25.

\(^{70}\) \textit{Ibid.}
the heart of the national economy remained untouched by foreign trade. Essentially, this was a natural economy [natural'noe khoziaistvo], that is, an economy in which almost everyone works only for himself and his family and not for the market. And, if this was the case, is it possible to consider foreign trade as the basic branch of the national economy during the Kievan period? The answer to this question can only be in the negative.71

Such a statement can only be appreciated within the greater context of his overall thesis which emphasised the fact that Kiev Rus' was the first period of Russia's historical development and therefore was the simplest and most primitive of societies.

Given that extractive industries did not depend on trade and trade was inconceivable without the products of extractive industries, Rozhkov's conclusion that trade had to be less important than extractive industries was at least logically correct. As he concluded: "there was nothing to indicate that external trade was a predominating branch of production in Kiev Rus', only that it was a noticeable phenomenon in the economic life of the country. It did not have primary influence but it did have significant influence all the same".72 Rozhkov supplied ample documentary evidence to support his claims and this made his history not only rich in detail and information but also convincing.73 Yet

71 Ibid. See also: Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnia, p. 12.
72 Ibid., p. 24.
73 Grekov, op.cit., pp. 46-47.
Rozhkov believed that he was doing more than producing a standard work of history. In putting forward his theory of Kiev Rus', there was no doubt in Rozhkov's mind that he was improving Kliuchevskii's analysis of this historical period by formulating general sociological laws.

Having concluded that Kiev Rus' was a society based on the activities of extractive industries and stock-rearing, what use did Rozhkov make of this conclusion? He made it quite clear that this conclusion was the first link of a much longer chain of causes and effects. As he wrote in 1903:

If we now attempt to construct a connected chain of causes and effects from the natural and economic phenomena analysed by us, then we would get a formula approximately like this: the sparseness of the population along with the abundance of gifts from nature gave rise, in the national economy of Kiev Rus', to the predominance of extractive industries and stockbreeding with a secondary significance going to agriculture and foreign trade. There was just a touch of domestic trade and processing industries.74

Rozhkov's summary of the sequence of events is so crucial to understanding his interpretation of Kiev Rus' that it is worth quoting in full. He wrote:

The predominance of extractive industries and stockbreeding led to the predominance of a free form of land exploitation [vol'nago zemlepol'zovaniia] but the small

The amount of agriculture and foreign trade restricted free land exploitation by the bounds of the verv' and gave rise to landownership by princes, boyars and monasteries based on the idea of total ownership. Free land exploitation along with the predominance of extractive industries and stockbreeding created a family form of enterprise and an extensive system of economy whereas the landownership of princes, boyars and monasteries together with agriculture and foreign trade produced new forms of half-free and unfree labour. The predominance of primitive branches of industry, of free land exploitation and of the family form of economy gave rise to the near-equal distribution of necessary goods. Meanwhile, the admixture of foreign trade, of total individual landownership and unfree and half-free labour concentrated money capital into the hands of a few. Finally, that very predominance of extractive industries and stockbreeding, the free exploitation of the land and the extensive system of the economy produced and developed a distinctive pattern of colonisation with the Russian people settling along the eastern-European plain.75

The important role that extractive industries played in Rozhkov's account, as the predominant branch of production, is clearly demonstrated in this quotation. As the first cause in this long chain, it determined the remaining economic factors that shaped every aspect of society. Rozhkov believed that the predominant branch of the economy was the necessary cause of social development.

75 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
Rozhkov succeeded in reducing a complex set of phenomena to a simple sequence of cause and effect. His error was to over-emphasise the concept of one-sided causation. Just how rigidly Rozhkov adhered to his notion of causality as additive sequence can be gauged from the persistent manner with which he defended his chain of phenomena.76 According to Rozhkov, a free or predatory form of land exploitation [*vol'noe ili zakhvatnoe zemlepol'zovanie*] existed in Kiev Rus'. This meant that land was free to be used by any individual or groups of individuals. The population was so small and land was so abundant that once a region [*okrug ili volost’*] was exhausted of its natural wealth, that is, of its animal and plant life, people migrated to a new region and continued their way of life. Rozhkov, it would appear, considered that the inhabitants of Kiev Rus' lacked a sense of territoriality. As Rozhkov claimed, "a basic economic requirement of the primitive producer was to be able to wander about and this requirement was prompted by the predominance of extractive industries which involved chasing wild animals, finding wild bees and occupying fresh pastures for the herd".77

Rozhkov argued that given the nomadic nature of the Kiev Rus' population it was impossible "to have a permanent and continuous ownership of land or a

76 This difficulty was made worse by the fact that under the category of natural phenomena Rozhkov included population. As will be shown in chapter five, Rozhkov uses the category of population as the link between natural and economic phenomena.

completely settled way of life". He acknowledged that the sources were plentiful or conclusive enough to prove this point outright. To supplement the available primary material Rozhkov described how it was necessary to have recourse to two methodological procedures. These were the use of analogy and inference drawn from contemporary observations of more backward societies.

The lack of "completely clear" documentary evidence regarding the type of land exploitation practised in Kiev Rus' led Rozhkov to a comparative analysis of "Germanic landowning contracts [poriadki] before and after the conquest of the Western Roman empire" and to a study of "the forms of landownership that existed in Siberian and Kazak communities of Russia". He concluded that on the basis of such comparative studies it was possible to confirm his belief that a free exploitation of the land prevailed in Kiev Rus'. As Rozhkov put it: "a free or predatory exploitation of land existed in every country which had the economic conditions that prevailed in Kiev Rus' until the end of the XII century".

At the same time, Rozhkov did not deny the existence of landownership in Kiev Rus'. He believed

78 Ibid.
79 Rozhkov, Obzor, op.cit., Chast' I, p. 34.
80 Ibid., p. 28
81 Ibid. See also: Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnia, p. 14.
82 Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnia, p. 14. See also: Rozhkov, Obzor, op.cit., Chast' I, p. 33.
that “new forms” of landownership began to appear as early as the tenth century. He claimed that, according to the sources, land began to be owned by princes, members of the nobility and the clergy. His explanation of the rise of private landownership in Russia relied heavily on Kliuchevskii’s analysis of foreign trade. Like Kliuchevskii, Rozhkov examined the complexities and controversies of the origins of landownership. Unlike Kliuchevskii, Rozhkov concluded that private property developed as a consequence of one major influence — foreign trade.83

According to Rozhkov, foreign trade affected only a very small proportion of the population. It was the occupation of princes, druzhiny, merchants and well-to-do town dwellers.84 This layer of society became wealthy and powerful through trade. As well as obtaining luxury goods, this trading elite amassed huge amounts of capital which began to play an increasingly important role in foreign trade. According to Rozhkov, capital allowed those who possessed it “to acquire a considerable amount of unfree and half-free labour”.85 These slaves and half-free labourers were forced to occupy and exploit enormous areas of land.

83 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast’ I, p. 34.
85 Ibid.
labourers produced more goods for trade and this, in turn, increased the wealth of their owners.86

In Rozhkov's opinion, landownership arose as a result of foreign trade which was of secondary economic importance in Kiev Rus'. The mass of the population was preoccupied with extractive industries and had no need for forced or unfree labour or for landownership.87 The bulk of the population lived at a subsistence level. It produced goods for its own consumption instead of for a market. Therefore, there were good economic reasons for keeping the numbers of people working together relatively small; as the population increases, it becomes more difficult to meet its needs.

The issue of how land was exploited led Rozhkov to an examination of the forms of production [formy khoziaistva], that is, he examined how labour was organised and used. According to Rozhkov, the bulk of the population consisted of free peasants or smerdy. The family [sem'ia] was the prevailing economic unit.88 People worked in family units and "each family satisfied its own needs with its own resources".89 As the population was small and the territory that was suitable for extractive industries was enormous, a family unit could occupy any area it wanted and could

86 Ibid.
87 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast' I, pp. 36-37.
88 Ibid., p. 36.
89 Ibid., p. 37.
graze cattle on any pasture it found without difficulty. As Rozhkov pointed out, "given these conditions, there was no room for the development of unfree or slave labour in the peasant economy of Kiev Rus".90

To support his argument, Rozhkov cited Greek sources which state that "Slavs, in the period of their expulsion from the neighbouring Carpathian region, did not have many slaves and the few slaves they did have were treated with care and were often set free".91 Rozhkov also pointed out that the important document Russkaia Pravda did not mention anything about smerdy or peasants owning slaves [kholopy]. On the other hand, according to Rozhkov, there was no shortage of evidence to suggest that the family was the predominant economic unit of the Kiev Rus' period.

Further developing the sequence in his chain of causality, Rozhkov claimed that the technology [tekhnika] or system of economy of the Kiev Rus' period was extensive. He wrote: "An economy is extensive when the methods and means used to manage it are simple, that is, when it does not require much labour and capital".92 Rozhkov wrote: "the abundance of gifts from nature and the prevailing form of land exploitation reveal that the technology of Kiev Rus' was primitive or predatory. In other words, it was extensive in character.

90 Ibid. See also: Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnia, p. 17.
91 Ibid.
92 N.A. Rozhkov, Uchebnik russkoi istorii dlia srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii i dlia samoobrazovaiia (Moscow, third revised and enlarged edition, 1907), p. 12.
It did not require a lot of labour or expenditure of capital".93

Hunting involved the "merciless, wasteful annihilation of wild animals that were found with such abundance in the huge forests that there was no need for any rules or restrictions on hunting".94 The technological methods of apiculture were also very primitive. As Rozhkov pointed out, all the documents dealing with the Kievan period, including Russkaia Pravda, refer to ancient apiculture as bortnichestvo.95 Bortnichestvo is the name given to the form of apiculture which does not need artificial hives or apiaries for the bees. The apiarist simply collected the honey and wax which the wild bees had produced in the hollow trees of the forests. Such an activity required very little labour and very little, if any, money. The apiarist usually placed a "sign" [znamia] on the hollow tree to indicate that it had been claimed and, when it was time, simply gathered the honey and wax that had accumulated there.

With regard to the limited agriculture that was practised, Rozhkov claimed that only a slash-burn or swidden [podsechnaia, ognevaia or liadinnai] agricultural system was possible.96 Referring specifically to the forest zone region, Rozhkov believed

93 Rozhkov, Obzor, Chast’ I, p. 38.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., p. 39.
that an area of forest had to be cleared (the process of cutting or hacking down trees was known as *podseka*) and the undergrowth was burnt (this was the *ognevoi* process). Such a burnt-out patch of woodland made suitable for agriculture was known as *liado*. In the cleared area covered in wood ashes, "grain was sown for a year or two and then the operation was repeated on another plot of land for another year or two until it was transferred to a third plot of land and so on". Rozhkov came to the conclusion that "agriculture was distinguished by the same predatory and nomadic character that distinguished the extractive industries".

Rozhkov believed that Kiev Rus' was a primitive and simple society. He believed this was so because of the predominance of extractive industries, the absence of landownership, the existence of a low level of technology and the important role played by the family. In his opinion, there was very little variation in the way most people lived. This was very clearly demonstrated in his examination of "the distribution of economic goods", the last and most difficult category that explained the economic way of life of Kiev Rus'. He claimed that the huge majority of the population had a "sufficient supply of the means and materials of

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97 The plural of liado being liada, hence the Russian term liadinniaia sistema.
100 Rozhkov, *Obzor, Chast’ I*, pp. 39 and 41.
production" and that they were ensured a "comfortable existence" [bezbednoe sushchestvovanie] because of the "scarcity of the population and the abundance of gifts from nature". According to Rozhkov, the family unit [semeinyi soiuz] was the employer, the landowner and the worker all at the same time. In other words, "the family unit possessed all the instruments of production — capital, land and labour".

Rozhkov concluded his analysis of the economic phenomena of Kiev Rus' by drawing two conclusions. He claimed that "necessary goods [predmety neobkhodimosti] were distributed sufficiently evenly and luxury goods [predmety roskoshi] or money capital [denezhnyi kapital] must have been distributed very unevenly as it was concentrated in those layers of society that participated directly in foreign trade". The vast proportion of the population lived at a roughly equal level. He believed that because the family unit was the prevailing labour structure, the economic exploitation of individuals was almost non-existent. There was no need for economic competition because everyone worked together to provide a "comfortable existence" for all the members of the family. All the necessary requirements for existence were distributed evenly among the members of the family.

101 Ibid., pp. 39-40.
102 Ibid., p. 40.
103 N.A. Rozhkov, Osnovnye zakony razvitiia obshchestvennykh iavlenii (Kratkii ocherk sotsiologii) (Moscow, 1907), p. 22.
According to Rozhkov, the greatest inequality existed in the distribution of luxury goods and money. These were concentrated in the hands of the few that were directly involved with trade. However, because luxury goods were not necessary and money was not essential in a natural economy, the vast majority of the population, according to Rozhkov, was unaffected by this inequality in the distribution of luxury items and money. Rozhkov argued that the equality that existed in Kiev Rus' began to disappear quickly once extractive industries ceased to be the predominant branch of the economy.