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SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONTENT AND THEORY OF SOVIET GEOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHY deserves a place in the picture of Russian scientific advance which has lately rocketed into the public consciousness of the West. The last few years have witnessed an increase in the output of Soviet geographical writing to a point where it is at least as voluminous as that of any other country. At the same time there has been a notable trend towards more objective appraisal of foreign work and the beginnings of academic travel abroad. A growing academic consciousness has been associated with a greater tendency to look up from practical tasks, embark upon more purely cultural aspects, and, above all, to argue about the content and theoretical framework of the subject, its emphasis and prospects. This paper attempts to examine the character and significance of this expansion of Soviet geography and the direction it appears to be taking.

THE DIMENSIONS

In 1950 there was still only one regular academic geographical periodical—the “Izvestiia” of the All-Union Geographical Society, which was already a hundred years old. The Academy of Sciences did issue a so-called “Geographical and Geophysical series” of its regular transactions, but geographical articles were few, most of them with a geophysical flavor. Today the young “Geographical Series” of the Academy of Sciences, appearing six times a year, has become the chief outlet for that massively organized research center, the Institute of Geography, and is expanding so rapidly that it is expected to become a monthly before long.¹ In addition there are three irregular publications,² normally appearing several times a

year, which usually take the form of a group of stock-taking or exploratory articles on a single topic, ranging from “geography of cities” to “glaciology” or “the vegetation of Sakhalin.” Another periodical which deserves note is “Geography in the School” which, in addition to some academic papers, features accounts of new projects and reports from high school and university field expeditions.³ The scope and scale of the Soviet teaching and research institutions in geography⁴ go far towards explaining the present dimensions of geographical publication. The research institutions are concentrated largely in Moscow and, secondarily, Leningrad, but there has recently been a trend towards more decentralization—for instance, the setting up of Research Institutes of Geography in such places as Irkutsk and Tashkent and the launching of regional geographical journals.⁵ A bibliography of geographical publications cannot be given here⁶ but mention should be made of the appearance since 1955 of some twenty economic-regional monographs, covering almost all of the Soviet Union, under the direction of the Institute of Geography of the Academy of Sciences. Basic statistical information has begun to appear also in the last two or three years and a full-scale census is to be taken in 1959 with the participation of geographers. In

Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo Soiuza S.S.S.R. (Moscow, 1952-).

The following semiregular journals have ceased publication:

Zemlevedenie: geograficheskii zhurnal, obshchestvo liubiteli estestvoznania, antropologii i etnologii. Geograficheskoe otdelenie (Moscow, 1892-1950).

Problemy fizicheskoi geografii, Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R. Institut geografii (Moscow, 1934-1951).

³ *Geografiia v shkole* (Moscow, 1934-).

⁴ C. D. Harris, “Geographic research and teaching institutions in the Soviet Union: Notes on trip to USSR in May-June 1957.” Mimeographed; summary published in *The Professional Geographer*, Vol. 10 (Jan. 1958), pp. 8-13.

⁵ E.g., *Voprosy geografii dal'nego vostoka* (Khabarovsk 1956-); *Voprosy geografii Kazakhstan* (Alma Ata 1956-).

⁶ See C. D. Harris, “Geographical Literature on the Soviet Union—a discussion,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 42 (1952), pp. 615-27; monthly list of Russian accessions, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹ “Obsuzhdenie zhurnala Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia v Moskovskom filiale Geograficheskogo Obshchestva S.S.S.R.,” *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia*, 1957, No. 4, p. 96.

² *Trudy*, Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R. Institut geografii (Moscow, 1931-).

Voprosy Geografii, Vsesoiuznoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo. Moskovskii filial. Nauchnie sborniki (Moscow, 1946-).

Geograficheskii Sbornik, Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R.;

short, the student of the geography of the Soviet Union is now much more amply supplied with up-to-date, detailed, and objective information than he was at the beginning of the present decade.

THE "TWO GEOGRAPHIES"—THEIR
NATURE AND STATUS

What is the character of this rising flood of geographical literature and what direction does it seem to be taking? There is no doubt that physical geography has been the dominant partner among the "geographical sciences" and that it still is, though to a markedly reduced extent. Before the war, and indeed until about 1952, it was normal for three-quarters or even nine-tenths of the total space in the geographical periodicals to be devoted to this branch and much the same proportion in books. Since the year of Stalin's death, however, the physical proportion in the regular periodicals has been gradually reduced to little more than half (by 1957) and more and more of the books have been concerned with economic geography. However this still leaves a physical preponderance at least as marked as in the Davisian heyday in the United States, and this in a country where physical determinism is vigorously denied and economic determinism upheld.

Soviet physical geography is in itself well-integrated and broadly based, in the tradition of pre-revolutionary Russian scholars, in particular Dokuchaev, whose "natural zones" still form the basis for the physical description and classification of the country. Highly detailed analyses of contemporary physical processes loom large in the literature, typical subjects being the heat and water balance of the earth's surface, snow drifting, sand-dune shifting, permafrost, streamwork, soil erosion, and glaciation. Practical party-set tasks, especially concerned with the "transformation of nature," and often primary exploration have occupied thus far much of the physical geographer's attention, though one finds a few "paleogeographical" studies producing what Richard Russell calls "conclusions of vertical rather than horizontal significance."⁷ The prevailing approach, however, is functional and dynamic

⁷ R. J. Russell, "Geographical Geomorphology," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 39 (1949), p. 4.

and suffers from neither the American geographer's apparent lack of concern with physical processes nor the geological squint which still afflicts many West European physical geographers. It seems probable that the richest body of physico-geographical knowledge in the world is being accumulated in the Soviet Union and its broad integrated character will probably ensure that any relative decline will not involve throwing the baby away with the bathwater as in the reaction of American geography to the Davisian experience.

Economic geography, often called in the U.S.S.R. "the youngest of the geographical sciences," is an umbrella term for all non-physical geography, and reflects the prevailing Marxist philosophy of economic determinism. Here too the accent has tended to be on the evaluation of resources and the requirements of the official Plans, with much attention given to the delimitation of economic regions. As economic geography has been looked upon as a self-contained social science, *ipso facto* governed by social laws, "socialist laws" of the distribution of production and population have been sought. However, an examination of the work in economic geography published, say, since 1955 cannot fail to give the impression of an increasingly empirical and nondogmatic approach. It is instructive to compare the first university textbook on the economic geography of the U.S.S.R.⁸ with the recent equivalent.⁹ The new work is strictly regional in format, and has jettisoned entirely the discussion of socialist laws of distribution and extended quotations from Stalin which characterized large sections of the earlier book. The geographical character of the later work has been deepened not only by the adoption of the regional approach but by increased attention to historical and physical geography. The composite regional economic maps in this work, as in the regional monographs mentioned earlier, are plentiful and highly informative. The increasingly high standard of Soviet cartography as shown both in the atlases and in the illustration of books may be mentioned

⁸ *Economic Geography of the U.S.S.R.*, edited by S. S. Balzak, V. F. Vasiutin, and Ia. G. Feigin. American edition edited by C. D. Harris (N.Y., 1949). First published in U.S.S.R. in 1940.

⁹ *Ekonomicheskaiia Geografiia S.S.S.R.*, edited by G. N. Cherdantsev, N. P. Nikitin, and B. A. Tutykhin, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1956-57.)

here, though also evident is an odd reluctance to provide enough maps for illustrating the papers in the academic journals. Population geography is considered an integral part of economic geography and increasing treatment has been accorded recently to more purely social and especially urban geography. Historical geography is still a rather poorly developed and defined field, while there seem to be virtually no studies in political geography as such.

THE CASE FOR SEGREGATION

In the above discussion of content the separate treatment of physical and economic geography follows the common practice of most Soviet geographers. This segregation constitutes perhaps the most important point of divergence between Soviet and American geography. Moreover this question is often touched on directly or indirectly in current Soviet academic discussion and these discussions serve to bring into focus the character of present-day Soviet geography and its increasingly vigorous cross-currents.

In general (and there are notable exceptions), it seems that the segregationists are the physical geographers while the economic geographers are integrationist. Pronouncements from the "summit" of any profession are apt to be quite influential and it happens that the present and former directors of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Geography (Academicians Gerasimov and Grigor'ev) are physical geographers who were apparently elected to their position primarily by geologists and who have taken and still take a definite stand on this question. The basic argument voiced by the protagonists of "two scientific disciplines" is that fundamentally different laws underlie the development of the phenomena which are studied in physical and economic geography, respectively.¹⁰ The American "monistic" view of geography is

¹⁰ E.g., I. P. Gerasimov, "Sostoianie i zadachi sovetskoi geografii na sovremennom etape ee razvitiia," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., serii geograficheskai*, 1955, No. 3, pp. 14-15; A. A. Grigor'ev, "O nekotorykh voprosakh fizicheskoi geografii," *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1951, No. 1, p. 193; V. F. Vasiutin, "Osnovy razmeshcheniia sotsialisticheskogo proizvodstva i zadachi ekonomicheskoi geografii," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., serii geograficheskai*, 1955, No. 3, pp. 25-33.

dismissed largely on this count.¹¹ Gerasimov stresses that in order to make an adequate analysis today, it is necessary to have profound specialist knowledge and access to special methods of investigation; that the lone geographer has necessarily given place to the crew of geographers, each with his own specialism and cementing greater and greater bonds with related natural or social sciences.¹² This seems to invite centrifugal forces to pull geography apart, but even proponents of segregation tend to stress the "close bonds"¹³ existing between the objects and phenomena studied in geography. However, this seems to be mere lip service when one observes the erection of a *cordon sanitaire* through the middle of geography which hardly allows even recognition, much less a strengthening, of these bonds, and which makes physical geographers more at home with geologists, and economic geographers with economists, than with their fellow geographers. Gerasimov's recent suggestion that the fountainhead of Soviet geographical theory—the "Geographical Series" of the Academy of Sciences—might be split into two parallel series, physical and economic, would seem to lead to a further deepening of the chasm.

One of the obstacles to a unified geography in the Soviet Union is the bugbear of crude physical determinism which has only very recently become partially detached from the basic conception of Western geography in Soviet eyes, and which seems to many a probable result of a "monistic" treatment of the subject.¹⁴ The influence of Hettner has for some years been regarded as a snare and a

¹¹ A. A. Grigor'ev, "Obshchie voprosy geografii u fizicheskaii geografii v knige 'American Geography, Inventory and Prospect,'" *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., serii geograficheskai*, 1956, No. 1, pp. 118-19. (A translation of this whole review was edited and distributed in mimeograph form by C. D. Harris; May, 1956.)

¹² I. P. Gerasimov, "Le rôle de la géographie dans la construction socialiste en USSR et les tendances actuelles de son evolution," *Essais de Géographie* (recueil des articles pour le 18^e congrès international géographique [Moscow, 1956]), p. 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 7; A. A. Grigor'ev, "Iz istorii sovetskoi geografii," *Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., serii geograficheskai*, Vol. 5 (1957), p. 107.

¹⁴ A. A. Grigor'ev, *op. cit.* (fn. 11), pp. 118-19; S. V. Kalesnik, "O novom opyte obobshcheniia po teoreticheskim voprosam fizicheskoi geografii," *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 90 (1958), pp. 142-45.

delusion for Soviet and American geographers alike. In a review of Hartshorne's "Nature of Geography,"¹⁵ the Hettnerian influence was seen and deplored in the chorological approach, the "anti-historicism" and the systematic-regional division as opposed to the "Marxist" physical-economic division. Similarly one highly placed economic geographer¹⁶ condemned a series of regional essays by another¹⁷ as an antiscientific compilation of "one geography" on the basis of "vulgar geographism" (i.e., environmentalism). Here again the "bourgeois methodology" of Hettner and the "Kantian idealistic classification" were branded as the responsible philosophy. Although judgements in similar terms have become much less common in the last two years, vestiges of the attitudes remain, just as the veiled use of physical regions as strait-jackets into which human phenomena are fitted, still not unknown in the West, is a remnant of a more frankly stated environmentalism. It may be stated in favor of the segregationist position that it more or less eliminates such question-begging, but this is a negative virtue at best, realized at the cost of impoverishment and incompleteness of treatment on both sides. The well-integrated and intensively cultivated field of physical geography seems to have become a self-contained vested interest, unwilling to be disturbed or re-oriented within a larger unity.

A HISTORICAL DIGRESSION

The practice and advocacy of geographical segregation in Russia has, in fact, quite shallow roots. It is doubtful whether any of the scholars who moulded Russian geography around the turn of the century would have approved it. Even Dokuchaev, whose genetic formulation of the system of "natural zones" laid the foundations for the integrated Soviet physical geography of today, considered that the transition from one zone to another fluc-

tuates "with the character of the agricultural activities, type of settlement and even habits of mind of the population."¹⁸ D. N. Anuchin, probably the greatest and most wide-ranging of all prerevolutionary Russian geographers, insisted on dividing geography not into physical and economic, but into general and regional.¹⁹ The idea of a regional geography focussed on man and his relations with his environment was basic to his whole geographical philosophy.²⁰ A. I. Voeikov, though occupied mainly with climatology, also concerned himself with population distribution and with the improvement of agriculture.²¹ Petr Semënov Tian-Shanskii, the traveller and explorer, produced well-rounded regional descriptions of the French type.²² Veniamin Semënov Tian-Shanskii, editor of the monumental regional geography of Imperial Russia, wrote, as late as 1928, what amounts to a methodological model for regional geographers, emphasizing the completeness of the geographical circle and the basic "anthropocentricity" of geography.²³ Several references to Hettner and other western geographers occur in this latter work, without any abuse.²⁴

Thus it seems that the geographical schism dates from the era of the Five-year Plans, which harnessed geography to the immediate tasks, leaving little room for more cultural aspects of the subject, such as regional studies. Large *cadres* of physical specialists were trained and engaged immediately in primary exploration and specific technical problems, while economic geographers were similarly occupied with problems of regionalization, the location of the young industries, and so on. This probably led to greater associations with economists or geologists than with fellow

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3; see also V. V. Dokuchaev, *Uchenie o zonakh prirody*, ed. with introduction by Iu. G. Saushkin (Moscow, 1948).

¹⁹ V. A. Esakov, *D. N. Anuchin i sozdanie russkoi universitetskoi geograficheskoi shkoly* (Moscow, 1955), pp. 129-30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-43.

²¹ A. I. Voeikov, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, ed. A. A. Grigor'ev (Moscow, 1957), Vol. 4.

²² E.g., P. P. Semënov Tian-Shanskii, *La Russie extra-Européenne et Polaire* (Paris, 1900).

²³ *Rossiiia. Geograficheskoe opisaniie nashogo otechestva*, ed. V. P. Semënov Tian-Shanskii (St. Petersburg, 1898-1913), 19 vols.; V. P. Semënov Tian-Shanskii, *Raion i strana* (Moscow, 1928), pp. 45, 53 et al.

²⁴ *Ibid.* (*Raion i strana*), pp. 35-37.

¹⁵ V. Kotelnikov, "Voprosy metodologii geografii v osveshchenii amerikanskogo geografa R. Hartshorne po ego knige 'The Nature of Geography,'" *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 4, "Glatsiologia i geomorfologia" (1947), pp. 189-92.

¹⁶ Ia. G. Feigin, "O predmete i zadachakh ekonomicheskoi geografii," *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1951, No. 6, pp. 150-58.

¹⁷ Iu. G. Saushkin, *Geograficheskie ocherki prirody i selskokhoziaistvennoi detatel'nosti naseleniia v razlichnykh raionakh sovetskogo soiuza* (Moscow, 1957).

geographers. The disproportionate numerical growth of physical geographers may well have been due not only to the greater demand for their work at the time, but also to the fact that they were effectively outside the arena of political controversy. Economic geographers did not enjoy this innate protection, and were apparently liable to be dubbed "enemies of the people" for advocating certain courses of action in the location of industry.²⁵

THE CASE FOR INTEGRATION

This is the phase in the development of Soviet geography from which the profession seems to have been emerging vigorously in the last few years, as outlined in the earlier part of this paper. The new integrationists, who can invoke the aid not only of pre-Stalin Russian geographers but also Engels and Lenin, have focussed their attention particularly on the concepts of environment and of the indivisibility of nature and society. Most Soviet physical geographers use the word "environment" interchangeably with "the geographical envelope," "landschaft," the "natural territorial complex," and so on to indicate the core of their studies, but few seem to accept, or even realize its full implications as a key word in the unity of geography. For instance, Armand says that as the aim of "every science" in the Soviet Union is the "mastery of the power of the natural resources for the . . . improvement of the life of the workers"²⁶ there is no need for special human orientation, although he concedes that particular physical processes are modified or even set in train by man.²⁷ Further, he believes that recognition of the relativity to man implicit in the concept of environment would necessarily restrict the field to currently inhabited areas;²⁸ he seems unable to perceive that no logical departure is involved in examining the physical processes of an area with a view to explaining its human emptiness, past, present, and potential, or its function as climatic barrier, catchment area, and so on in relation to neighboring inhabited

areas—in short the evaluation of negative as well as positive qualities of environment.²⁹

Associated with this difficulty is the place of "paleogeography" as an "integral part of geography,"³⁰ though to a much smaller extent than in, say, Britain or Germany. For Gerasimov "the basic object of geomorphology" was "the elucidation of the history of the development of the present relief of the earth,"³¹ but he later discussed Russell's advocacy of a "geographical geomorphology" free from irrelevant genetic speculations, without disapproval.³² Several Soviet physical geographers have recently attempted to define the distinction between the geographical and geological aspects of this science which is so obviously borderline, somewhat independent, and rather awkward to integrate into physical geography as a whole. In these arguments³³ the greatest stress is placed on the necessity for geographical geomorphology to fit into the "interacting whole" of the physical environment, and for the adoption of a functional approach rather than one of origins and sequence. Physico-geographical regionalization seems now to be mainly based on criteria which are functional, qualitative and integrated—environment classified with an eye on its significance to the environed.³⁴

In spite of the increasing tendency for some physical geographers to advocate geographical unity, directly or indirectly, the most numer-

²⁵ Some human geographers in the West seem to find a similar difficulty here, e.g. O. H. K. Spate, "How Determined Is Possibilism?" *Geographical Studies*, Vol. 4 (1957), p. 5, for whom such an approach "effectively takes the 'Ge' out of Geography."

³⁰ Armand, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

³¹ I. P. Gerasimov, "Opyt geomorfologicheskoi interpretatsii obshchei skhemy geologicheskogo stroeniia S.S.S.R.," *Problemy fizicheskoi geografii*, Vol. 12 (1946), p. 34.

³² I. P. Gerasimov, "O roli Villiama Morrisa Devisa v razvitii sovremennoi geomorfologii," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia*, 1956, No. 1, p. 125. See also R. J. Russell (fn. 7 above).

³³ A. I. Spiridonov, "O predmete i osnovnykh metodakh geomorfologii," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 36 (1954), pp. 56-70; E. M. Murzaev, "Itogi i zadachi fiziko-geograficheskogo stranovedeniia v. S.S.S.R.," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia*, 1957, No. 5, pp. 50-55; Iu. K. Efremov, "O meste geomorfologii v krugie geograficheskikh nauk," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 21 (1950), pp. 41-54.

³⁴ E.g., "Fiziko-geograficheskoe raionirovanie," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 39 (1956). About 15 papers on this theme.

²⁵ *Economic Geography of the U.S.S.R.* (*op. cit.*, fn. 8), p. xliv.

²⁶ D. L. Armand, "Predmet, zadacha i tsel' fizicheskoi geografii," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 40 (1957), p. 72.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

ous, effective, and persistent salvos seem to have come from the economic "side." The veteran economic geographer Baranskii has long insisted on the regional approach as the only means to attain the real geographical objectives.³⁵ He accepts the necessity of geomorphology, industrial geography, and so on, as specialisms and says that "the trouble lies not in their existence but in their one-sidedness and inadequacy as generalizations."³⁶ In a review of *American Geography, Inventory and Prospect* he observes that "the presence in a single book of a summary of all branches of geography may give at least formal evidence of the unity of geography, and this is very important under present-day conditions."³⁷ Baranskii's successor as head of Economic Geography at Moscow University, Saushkin, has also long advocated and practiced integrated regional studies and has paid particular attention to such concepts as the cultural landscape and the distribution of population as convenient foci for achieving his aims.³⁸ Kabo, another influential protagonist of integration, has concentrated on the two-way impact of society and nature, and the indivisibility of the "social-territorial complex,"³⁹ while Kolosovskii feels that the essential unity of geography is expressed in the development of resources.⁴⁰ Nekrasov, deploring the gulf between "inhuman" physical geographers and "unnatural" economic geographers, declares that the geographer should "first and foremost be a specialist in the unified approach" and be able

to understand all his fellows. He stresses the similarity of geography to history in its all-embracing field, its preoccupation with man, and its educational rather than its strictly practical value.⁴¹ Pokshishevskii⁴² and Kovalev⁴³ make the point that physical conditions, all-important though they are, vary in function and value with the social and economic climate and habits of mind of the "anonymous heroes"⁴⁴—the population. Lidov criticized a paper on the heat and water balance of the earth's surface for not including relevant agricultural material, and so maintaining "the correct position."⁴⁵

The most articulate, uncompromising, and thorough theoretical advocacy of a unified geography in recent years is contained in a paper by V. A. Anuchin.⁴⁶ It is the idea of environment, he says, which makes a common system of geographical science from geomorphology to industrial geography and enables us to talk of a goal for the subject.⁴⁷ Concepts of a "broken" geography are founded on ignorance of the "existing reality" of the unity of society and nature. For elaboration of the changes wrought by humankind on nature he goes to Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* and Kimble's *Way of the World*,⁴⁸ while Lenin is quoted on the inter-relatedness of everything in the real world. The effects of man's activities are enshrined in the environments of posterity. "The opposition to unity in Soviet geography," he says, "in spite of employing outwardly Marxist phraseology, seems at root to contradict Marxism and appears as one of the manifestations of subjectivist idealism and one of the original forms of indeterminism."⁴⁹ Physical geography today suffers from too much abstraction and emphasis on single

³⁵ E.g., N. N. Baranskii, "Stranovedenie i geografiia fizicheskaiia i ekonomicheskaiia," *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 78 (1946), pp. 9-24.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁷ N. N. Baranskii, "Amerikanskaia geografiia, ee sovremennoe sostoianie i perspektivy razvitiia," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia*, 1956, No. 1, p. 135.

³⁸ Iu. G. Saushkin, "Kulturnii Landshaft," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 1 (1946), pp. 97-106; "Geograficheskoe izuchenie selskikh naselennikh punktov Sovetskogo soiuzna," *ibid.*, Vol. 5 (1947), pp. 53-66; and "K izucheniu landshaftov S.S.S.R. izmenennikh v protsesse i proizvodstva," *ibid.*, Vol. 24 (1951), pp. 276-99.

³⁹ R. M. Kabo, "Priroda i chelovek v ikh vzaimnykh otnosheniiakh kak predmet sotsial'no kul'turnoi geografii," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 5 (1947), pp. 5-32; and "Vysokogornye stepi chuiskoi doliny altaia (priroda i naselenie)," *ibid.*, Vol. 5 (1947), pp. 67-125.

⁴⁰ N. N. Kolosovskii, "Nauchnie problemy geografii," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 37 (1955), pp. 129-50.

⁴¹ F. G. Nekrasov, "Geografiia i geografii," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 18 (1950), pp. 102-4.

⁴² V. V. Pokshishevskii, "Les migrations intérieures en tant qu'objet d'étude géographique," *Essais de Géographie* (Moscow, 1956), pp. 260-71.

⁴³ S. A. Kovalev, "Les types d'habitat rural en U.R.S.S.," *Essais de Géographie*, pp. 272-82.

⁴⁴ Pokshishevskii, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

⁴⁵ V. P. Lidov, in a discussion (see fn. 1), pp. 93-94.

⁴⁶ V. A. Anuchin, "O syshchnosti geograficheskoi sredy i proiavlennii indeterminizma v sovetskoi geografii," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 41 (1957), pp. 47-64.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50; G. H. T. Kimble, *The Way of the World* (New York, 1953).

⁴⁹ *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 41 (1957), p. 56

elements, while economic geography often ignores not only physical but even historical factors.⁵⁰ Synthesis, based on detailed factual analysis, should be the geographical method.

THE PRACTICE OF INTEGRATION

The actual degree to which this widely-advocated geographical synthesis is worked out in a regional context is still very small. The prevailing segregation makes the necessary framework very difficult to construct, and cross-fertilization between physical and economic geographers in both training and writing remains sporadic, in spite of many individual pleas,⁵¹ mostly from the economic side. The series of regional economic-geographical monographs already mentioned constitutes an important step in this direction. The volumes on Kazakhstan, the "Povolzh'e," and the North Caucasus,⁵² for instance, are wide-ranging, well-written, detailed, and well supplied with maps. However, the head of the section of the Institute of Geography responsible for the whole series, Riazantsev, put his finger on their only real deficiency when he deplored the inadequacy of the weight given to physical geography. He urges the "creation of the situation" in which truly rounded regional monographs can be produced.⁵³

From the physical side one or two heralds of the resurrection of a truly regional approach have lately appeared. Murzaev's *Middle Asia* is the most significant. What distinguishes this work⁵⁴ from previous scholarly writing on

Soviet physical geography⁵⁵ is not the insertion of new subject matter, but the unequivocal nature of the new philosophical stance. Although explicitly a study in physical geography, the first chapter is devoted to a concise discussion of the economic, political, and population patterns of the region, and its general geographical context. The fact that the criteria for the selection and presentation of material are functional by no means excludes the study of contemporary processes or a thoroughly genetic approach to the understanding of the interacting elements of the environment.

V. A. Anuchin's regional monograph on Transcarpathia⁵⁶ is a rare modern example of a work explicitly in regional geography (*stranovedenie*) in which due weight is given to physical, historical, economic, and social factors, and in which the expressed aim is to illuminate the relationship between environment, economy, and population distribution.⁵⁷ Apparently a composite geography of the Soviet Union, comparable with the French *Géographie Universelle* or the prerevolutionary Russian series,⁵⁸ long pleaded for, has now been recommended for ultimate publication.⁵⁹

Much of the credit for such positive changes in the integration-climate of Soviet geography as have occurred over the last decade should go to the periodical *Questions of Geography (Voprosy Geografii)*⁶⁰ which by precept and example has seemed more than any other vehicle to bring all geographers

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵¹ E.g., A. N. Rakitnikov, "Kakaia podgotovka po fizicheskoi geografii nuzhna studentam ekonomiko-geograficheskoi spetsialnosti," *Voprosy Geografii*, Vol. 18 (1950), pp. 158-67; V. K. Yatsunskii, "Znachenie istoricheskoi geografii v podgotovke ekonomiko-geografa," *ibid.*, pp. 163-68.

⁵² *Kazakhstan S.S.R., ekonomiko-geograficheskaiia kharakteristika*, ed. O. R. Nazarevskii and N. N. Baranskii (Moscow, 1957); *Povolzh'e, ekonomiko-geograficheskaiia kharakteristika*, ed. K. V. Dolgoplov, V. V. Pokshishevskii, and S. N. Riazantsev (Moscow, 1957); *Severnii Kavkaz, ekonomiko-geograficheskaiia kharakteristika*, ed. E. P. Maslov, A. I. Gozulov, and S. N. Riazantsev (Moscow, 1957).

⁵³ S. N. Riazantsev, "Itogi i zadachi rabot po ekonomiko-geograficheskomy stranovedeniu provodimikh institutom geografii Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R.," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia*, 1957, No. 5, p. 61.

⁵⁴ E. M. Murzaev (ed.), *Sredniaia Aziia—fiziko-geograficheskaiia kharakteristika* (Moscow, 1958), 647 pp. An abridged version is E. M. Murzaev, *Sredniaia*

Aziia—fiziko-geograficheskaiia ocherk (Moscow, 1957), 270 pp. Of similar scope and orientation should be mentioned N. I. Mikhailov, *Sibir—fiziko-geograficheskii ocherk* (Moscow, 1956).

⁵⁵ E.g., L. S. Berg, *Natural Regions of the U.S.S.R.*, American translation edited by J. A. Morrison and C. C. Nikiforoff (New York, 1950); S. P. Suslov, *Fizicheskaiia geografiia S.S.S.R. Aziatskaia Chast'* (2nd ed.; Moscow, 1954); B. F. Dobrynin, *Fizicheskaiia geografiia S.S.S.R. Evropeiskaia Chast' i Kavkaz* (2nd ed.; Moscow, 1948); A. A. Grigor'ev (ed.), *Kazakhstan: obshchaia fiziko-geograficheskaiia kharakteristika* (Moscow, 1950).

⁵⁶ *Geografiia sovetskogo zakarpat'ia* (Moscow, 1956).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁸ See fn. 23 above.

⁵⁹ "Koordinationnoe soveshchanie po probleme 'Geografiia S.S.S.R.,'" *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskaiia*, 1957, No. 5, pp. 62-64. Also N. N. Baranskii, "Eshche raz 'Bolshoi geografii S.S.S.R.,'" *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 90 (1958), pp. 134-41.

⁶⁰ See fn. 2 above.

together effectively and lay the foundations for unity.

But the stumbling blocks on the road to a truly rounded regional geography are still substantial. A meaningful synthesis would demand cooperation and an altered orientation on the part of many influential people, chiefly on the physical side. In spite of the strides made by economic geography from virtual obscurity just after the war, the stage of "separate but equal," perhaps an essential stepping stone to integration, is not quite yet. No geographers other than physical geographers have yet been admitted to full membership in the Academy of Sciences, and unfortunate incidents like the following lead to suspicions that must be very frustrating to protagonists of geographical unity. The new edition of the "U.S.S.R." volume of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*⁶¹ lists in its account of the activities of the various sciences "Geography (Physical)" in place of just "Geography" which was used in the first edition of 1947. Four pages are devoted to the various specialisms of physical geography, indicating the advances of the last decade, compiled by "collective authors" from the Geology-Geography Section of the Academy of Sciences.⁶² Economic geography, on the other hand, receives just one sentence which is submerged in a long tract on "Economic Science."⁶³ There is no mention of the important achievements represented by the economic-regional monographs (even though published by the Institute of Geography of the Academy of Sciences) or of the other books mentioned earlier in this paper. An abundance of original and provocative work in all branches of geography was published in the forty-odd volumes of *Questions of Geography* between the appearance of the first and second editions of the *Encyclopaedia*, and yet none of this is referred to at all. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this should evoke the ire and the irony of the Professor of Economic Geography at Moscow University.⁶⁴ He charges that the "collective authors have

held up a completely distorting mirror to the achievements of Soviet geography, 'forgetting' the most important of its works, its completeness as a science, dismantling it into parts and representing it as . . . only physical geography."⁶⁵ Many Western geographers will lament with him when he says that "While geographers are often accused of being inadequate, others are chosen to speak for them . . . it is a good thing that a science exists and evolves regardless of what is written in encyclopaedias." He wonders why all this did not come to the notice of one of the editors of the volume, Academician Grigor'ev, who, although he has apparently done no substantive work in economic geography, has at times ventured to pronounce on its methodology (and has in fact been criticized for this).⁶⁶ One must hope that the whole affair was an unfortunate oversight, but at best it is an indication of a woeful lack of communication between geographers and the urgent need for more unity of purpose and action. But there is no point in reading too much significance into such a lapse; the facts remain that economic geography has grown a great deal since the war in the Soviet Union and that many practical and theoretical moves towards a united geography have been made. Moreover, Academician Gerasimov has presided, as Director of the all-important Institute of Geography, over a flood of publications in economic geography, and has proclaimed that "the principal object of geography, now as before, is a general study of the natural conditions, economy and population of diverse regions, countries and the world as a whole."⁶⁷ Further, an encouraging report was issued recently telling of the impending publication of a four-volume *Short Geographical Encyclopaedia* compiled by a representative group of physical and economic geographers, including Gerasimov, in which one section is to be devoted to "geography as a whole."⁶⁸

SOVIET GEOGRAPHY AND THE WEST

Soviet geography has not yet produced its

⁶¹ *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia*, "S.S.S.R.," Vtoroe Zdanie (Moscow, 1957).

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 480-83.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

⁶⁴ Iu. G. Saushkin, "K ishcheznovenniu geografii i ekonomicheskoi geografii v tome 'S.S.S.R.' Bol'shoi Sovetskoi entsiklopedii," *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 90 (1958), pp. 190-91.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁶⁶ O. A. Konstantinov, "O suzheniyakh akad. A. A. Grigor'eva po metodologicheskim voprosam ekonomicheskoi geografii," *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 84 (1952), pp. 59-72.

⁶⁷ I. P. Gerasimov (see fn. 12 above), p. 7.

⁶⁸ "O geograficheskoi entsiklopedii," *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 90 (1958), pp. 299-300.

Hartshorne, but it is hoped that this paper has provided a glimpse of the material he will have at his disposal. It is probable that the body of geographical material now being built up in Russian will prove to be at least as significant to English-speaking geographers as that in any other language. And yet we must admit that it has scarcely swum into our ken. Hartshorne's exhaustive examination of the methodological writings in English, German, and French up to 1939 led him to mention only one Russian geographer.⁶⁹ This void in the Western geographical literature has apparently not changed appreciably. Thus the most recent edition of *Geography in the Twentieth Century*⁷⁰ has no discussion of Russian geography to set alongside those of several other European schools of geographical thought. Whereas it is common for English-written articles and books to quote French or German references, it is almost unknown, except in the case of a specifically Soviet subject, to quote Russian. On the other hand, references to publications in English are quite normal in the Russian academic literature, and the chief geographical journals even insert a contents list in English. This almost total neglect of Russian geography in the West is surprising since the subject was comparatively well-established there in the second half of the nineteenth century, with several original and wide-ranging men writing and teaching. Only in Germany and France was geography rather better represented by the turn of the century. Soviet geographers today are very conscious of this heritage, even though they may differ sharply about its implications for present policies.

It is clear, then, that the past and present activities of Russian geography warrant much more attention in the West. That the Russians are vitally interested in American geography was amply demonstrated by their 28-page review of *American Geography, Inventory and Prospect*,⁷¹ to which most of the influential Soviet geographers contributed. As far as emphasis in their content is concerned, American and Soviet geography may be said to be

complementary, and individually somewhat lopsided—a condition which both countries seem to be moving to remedy. In practice, the content and trends of physical geography are basically similar, as Grigor'ev has noted⁷²—the great difference lies in the scale of operations. The vigorous expansion of Soviet economic geography in recent years and its extension to take in more and more regional, population, and settlement studies has also contributed strongly to a narrowing of the differences between the actual content in both countries, but here again there is a disparity of scale.

A further obstacle to mutual comprehension—the obtrusive ideological content and xenophobic vituperation which marred much otherwise competent work in Soviet economic geography—has been removed in the last few years, and the geographical character of the work has been deepened. On our side it may be said that the virtual extinction of crude environmentalism, a fact that the Soviet geographers have recently acknowledged, has removed another obstacle to mutual communication (and incidentally cleared away a shattered target). Soviet geography is more severely practical than American geography and hedged in by the requirements of party-set tasks. In recent years, however, even this condition has been considerably modified by the introduction of more purely cultural facets of the subject, such as the historical geography of towns (even the “abominable snowman” has merited a paper⁷³), and above all by the time taken up in methodological discussion. Soviet geographers have moved closer to the normal Western view of an academic subject as a more or less “pure” investigation of a field of knowledge, rather than as an instrument of policy.

The most significant point of divergence of Soviet from American geography is seen in its bicellular structure, but even here the ferment of debate has begun to set in. The official position is that owing to the supposed dichotomy between physical and social phenomena a monistic view of geography is unscientific. Is it possible that this analysis may be right and

⁶⁹ R. Hartshorne, “The Nature of Geography,” *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 29, nos. 3 and 4 (third printing 1949), p. 99.

⁷⁰ *Geography in the Twentieth Century*, ed. G. Taylor (3rd ed.; New York, 1957).

⁷¹ *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., seriia geograficheskata*, 1956, No. 1, pp. 115–43.

⁷² A. A. Grigor'ev, in review of *American Geography, Inventory and Prospect* (fn. 11 above), p. 121.

⁷³ S. V. Obruchev, “Novye materialy o snezhnom cheloveke na Pamire,” *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 89 (1957), pp. 339–43.

that the foundations of our "bridge" with which we straddle the physical and social sciences may prove to be built on sand, to be swept away by some future tide of logic or experience? Leighly seems to come close to this view when he declares that physical geography needs to be independent of human geography to thrive.⁷⁴ Although in this he is something of a lone voice among American geographers, it is conceivable that he may be right, in which case the linchpin will surely have been taken out of a unified geography, and the present official Soviet stand vindicated.

The unity of geography is now rarely questioned explicitly in the West, at least by geographers, and most of us would probably agree with the growing body of dissenting integrationists in the Soviet Union, who point out the constant interaction of man and nature and the focal significance of such unifying concepts as the distribution of population, the cultural landscape, natural resources, and environment.

But the best-laid plans for an integrated completeness in geography can be vitiated unless all the relevant branches of the subject are adequately cultivated. The study of some pertinent social aspects is still both cursory and biased in the Soviet Union, though this judgement has rapidly become less true in the last few years. On the other hand, the broad

⁷⁴J. Leighly, "What Has Happened to Physical Geography?", *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 45 (1955), pp. 309-18.

field of physical geography is seriously underdeveloped in the West in comparison with the Soviet Union. In the United States at least, following the post-Daviesian reorientation, the foundations for an integrated study of the physical environment have been laid. In Britain (and much of Western Europe) strong traditions of geographical unity have to some extent been sapped by the persistence of the dominant position within physical geography held by a geologically-focussed geomorphology.

The eclipse of environmentalism has made wide-ranging, detailed studies of the physical environment all the more vital to the survival of geography as a whole, and mutual relevance between studies on the physical and human sides seems essential. Soviet geography now more or less adequately fulfills this requirement in spite of the current duality of organization which originated in the particular historical context of the early Stalin era.

Incentive enough for the Western geographer to acquaint himself with Soviet writings lies in deepening his knowledge of geographical reality over a large and peculiarly neglected part of the world, where field work is still very difficult. But beyond this, in our attempts to organize and focus our subject to achieve a more meaningful coherence, contact with the techniques and theoretical arguments of the Soviet geographers should certainly yield some ideas of value as well as interest.⁷⁵

⁷⁵The author wishes to thank R. Hartshorne and John A. Morrison for their valuable criticism.