

the laws governing the distribution of goods among the various social classes? What are the laws of profit, of rent, of wages for labour? What is the relation existing between these categories, and what is their magnitude at each given epoch? What are the tendencies of social evolution determining this magnitude? These are the fundamental questions investigated by the theory of distribution. While the theory of value analyses the comprehensive fundamental phenomenon of the production of commodities, the theory of distribution must analyse the antagonistic social phenomena of capitalism, of the class struggle, which assumes new specific forms characteristic of the commodities economy as such. It is the task of a theory of capitalist distribution to show how this class struggle has assumed its capitalist formulation, in other words, how this struggle manifests itself in the form of economic laws.<sup>117</sup> To be sure, by no means all theorists conceive the tasks of a theory of distribution in this manner. Even in the formulation of the problem, two fundamental tendencies may be detected. We find here, says N. Shaposhnikov, one of the latest students in this field, "two diametrically opposed points of view, only one of which can be correct". (Shaposhnikov, *op. cit.*, p. 80.) The difference is in the fact that one group of economists seeks to explain the origin of the so called "income without labour" by means of the eternal and "natural" conditions of human management, while the other views this phenomenon as a consequence of the specific historical conditions, or, in concrete language, as a result of the private property in the means of production. Yet a more comprehensible formulation may be given of this problem, for, in the first place, we are not dealing merely with "income without labour", but also with "income from labour" (for instance, the concept of wages for labour is a correlative to that of profit, standing and falling with the latter); in the second place, the question as to the forms of distribution may be put in general form, *i.e.*, it may concern not only the forms of capitalist distribution, but also the universal dependence of the forms of distribution on the forms of production. An analysis of this question yields the following result: in its functional aspect, the process of distribution is nothing more or less than the process of re-