RUSSIA OBSERVED

Collected Essays on Russian and Soviet History

Richard Pipes

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In this book about Russian political culture—its ideas, institutions, and practices—Richard Pipes argues that notwithstanding formal changes in the nature of Russian governments since the Middle Ages, there are continuities that defy reform and survive revolution. Tracing the often subtle themes that reemerge from decade to decade, century to century, these essays describe an Elizabethan traveler's impressions of the contrast between Russian and European state and society; Russia's attempt in the early nineteenth century to militarize peasants, which proved a remarkable anticipation of Trotsky's similar attempt in 1920; the ambivalence toward Jews that was evident as early as the reign of Catherine II, when the country suddenly acquired a large Jewish population that it could not fit into the state structure; and the groundwork laid in Lenin's earliest writings for his later totalitarianism. Pipes also explores continuities in the treatment of ethnic minorities, focusing particularly on the Muslim nations under Russian rule. His essay on Max Weber questions whether a sociological approach that ignores Russia's political culture can adequately explain the country's behavior and predict its future. Taken together, these essays reflect the depth and breadth of a preeminent scholar's contribution to the study of Russian history.

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Introduction

The essays in this book span nearly four centuries of Russian history. Their topics differ, but they are linked by a common theme, which is Russian political thought and practice.

I was born in Polish Silesia, in the shadow of World War I. Although Warsaw, the city in which I was raised, had been part of the Russian Empire for a century—from the Congress of Vienna until the German occupation of 1915—in my personal life Russia played hardly any part. My father was a native of Austro-Hungarian Galicia and spent his youth in Vienna. During the war, he fought in the ranks of Pilsudski's Legions on the Austrian side. My first language was German: It was only at six, when I was enrolled in school, that I learned Polish. The main source of my cultural influence until the age of seventeen was Germany: as an adolescent I read Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Rilke; I pored over Meyer's *Konversationslexikon;* and I preferred German music to any other. Soviet Russia in the 1930s was hermetically sealed. Although geographically next door, it could as well have been on another planet: all that reached us from there were muted echoes of some terrible and incomprehensible tragedy. Apart from reading some Russian short stories and listening to Russian music, I do not recall having had any contact with the culture or politics of Russia up to the time when World War II broke out and I had to flee Poland with my parents, first to Italy and then the United States.

My interest in Russia was awakened by the Nazi-Soviet war—a war in which the fate of civilization was at stake and, one felt instinctively, even our very lives. I followed the progress of the campaigns and traced on maps the shifting lines of the Eastern front. In 1942, while a college junior, I realized with great excitement that with my knowledge of Polish I could easily acquire Russian. I bought a Russian grammar and dictionary, and began to teach myself. In 1943 I entered the army, which sent me to Cornell for a nine-month course of Russian. The faculty were no ordinary language teachers but émigré intellectuals, several of them Mensheviks and Socialists-Revolutionaries. The students, like myself in uniform, were mostly New York liberals with pro-Soviet sympathies

which I did not share: for although I ardently desired Soviet victory, I found their illusions about Stalinist Russia childish.

The war over, I enrolled at Harvard for a degree in history. My main interests were European cultural history, philosophy of history, and the history of Western art. I intended Russia to be only one of four fields required for the Ph.D. General Examination. Accordingly, the department initially assigned to me as faculty advisor Crane Brinton, a distinguished specialist in the history of European thought. It transpired, however, that the departmental requirements for a doctorate were more rigid than I had realized and that my broad program of studies in European *Geistesgeschichte* was not feasible. On Brinton's advice to settle on a national field, I chose Russia, and was reassigned to Michael Karpovich. While I did take courses in the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history, my graduate work became increasingly focused on Russia. The establishment in 1948 of the Russian Research Center had the further effect of committing me to that field: I became a Fellow of the Center a year later and found myself totally immersed in Russian and Soviet affairs.

When I think back and try to reconstruct the mental processes that led me to devote myself professionally to the study of Russia, I have to conclude that, initially at any rate, it was the overpowering presence and threat of Stalinist Russia which loomed as ominously over our lives after the war as Hitler's had done in the 1930s. For those who did not live through the immediate postwar period and have not experienced these sensations, they are probably difficult to understand. The weakness of "revisionist" histories of U.S.-Soviet relations during this period derives mainly from a failure of the imagination, which results in the "Cold War" being reduced to a conventional great power contest and "values" to mere propaganda tools. They were nothing of the kind to contemporaries to whom the Nazi-Soviet alliance of 1939 and cooperation against the Western democracies were fresh in memory and the postwar Stalinist terror a continuation of defunct Nazism. The Cold War appeared at the time as a test of wills whose outcome would determine whether the rest of the world would have to share the fate of the peoples of Russia under Lenin and Stalin. It was no mean issue.

Those of us who felt this way, naturally were deeply interested in understanding what made Soviet Russia behave as it did. This question could be answered in two ways: sociologically and historically. One could treat the Soviet Union without reference to its historical experience or political culture, as just another society at a certain stage of socio-economic development ("modernization" was then the fashionable word), best analyzed by comparison with other societies at a similar stage. This approach dominated thinking at the Russian Research Center, which

had been founded for the specific purpose of approaching Soviet Russia in an anthropological and sociological (i.e., ahistorical and apolitical) manner. I belonged to a small minority which held that a nation's behavior is shaped mainly by its historical experience and the unique culture that results from it, and that one can no more deduce this behavior from sociological models than understand an individual's behavior from generalizations about "human nature."

My earliest publication dealt with the Russian Military Colonies under Alexander I: it was adapted from a paper I had written in the spring of 1947 for Crane Brinton's seminar. The essay suffers from the faults of youth (I was only twenty-four at the time): it strains the argument and is written in a stiff, academic prose style that I then thought becoming a scholar. In writing it, I was vaguely conscious of an analogy between the colonies of Alexander I and Soviet collectives farms, and although the argument is not really worked out, it still seems to me to have merit.

I began work on my doctoral thesis in the summer of 1948. It was the heyday of Stalinist nationalism and it interested me to find out why and when a regime espousing an internationalist ideology had adopted an extreme form of Great Russian chauvinism. My dissertation, completed in 1950, dealt with the evolution of socialist and Communist thought on the subject of nationality and nationalism and concentrated on Lenin's tactical use of minority nationalism in his quest for power.

In the course of working on the dissertation, I discovered the "nationality question." Incredible as it may seem today, in the 1940s and 1950s it was widely believed that the Soviet government had succeeded in eliminating national frictions and even differences among its ethnic groups, assimilating them to the point where all that remained were colorful costumes and harmless folklore. I recall reading a statement of George Kennan's in *Foreign Affairs* to the effect that the Ukraine was as much part of Russia as Pennsylvania was of the United States. Alexander Bennigsen, the French Orientalist who later became a leading student of Soviet Muslims, maintained at that time that these peoples had lost their ethnic identity. Concrete evidence was hard to come by because the Soviet Union was more than ever insulated from the outside world. However, the reading of pre-Stalinist sources convinced me that this could not be the case—that minority nationalism, even though stifled, as everything else in the Soviet Union, remained very much alive. I decided to supplement my investigation of Soviet theory of nationalism with an inquiry into Soviet nationality policies during the Revolution and Civil War for which period sources were abundant. The result was my first book, *The Formation of the Soviet Union,* published in 1954.

One of the earliest fruits of this study was an account of Bashkiriia during the Revolution and Civil War. It exemplified the fusion of Communism and Russian nationalism which flourished under Stalin, but whose outlines, I now realized, had appeared already in Lenin's day. Robert Wolff referred to this essay in his review of Volume One of E. H. Carr's *The Bolshevik Revolution* in the *Times Literary Supplement* to argue that the English historian, in dealing with Bashkiriia, had ignored evidence that did not support his rather favorable view of early Bolshevik nationality policies. Carr defended himself with a lengthy response in *Soviet Studies*. Not long after I was surprised to learn that the protagonist of my article, Zeki Validov, whom I presumed dead, was on the faculty of the University of Istanbul. When we met, I had the unusual experience of testing my historical account against the living memory of a key participant.

In 1953, with assistance from the Institute of Intercultural Studies and the Ford Foundation, I spent the summer in Munich interviewing Muslim refugees (most of them ex-German prisoners of war) about Islam in Central Asia. The information which I systematically collected indicated strongly that ethnic differences and minority nationalism were very much alive in that area, at least until the outbreak of World War II. My findings, summarized in the *Journal of Middle Eastern History* in 1955, persuaded me conclusively that conventional wisdom was wrong, that non-Russian nationalism in the Soviet Union was a force to be reckoned with, and that in the years to come it would make itself increasingly felt. I wrote many articles on the subject, a sample of which I include in this collection ("'Solving' the Nationality Question"). But by then I abandoned researches in the nationality question, in part because I concluded that to proceed further I would have to learn the languages of the Soviet minorities and in part because my attention turned to Russian conservatism.

At the Russian Research Center, the debates between the sociologists and historians went on. In 1954 I decided to find out what the sociological method had been able to accomplish in analyzing and forecasting events the outcome of which was known. As the test case I took Max Weber, generally (and rightly) regarded as the greatest sociologist, who also happened to have devoted much attention to Russia. I wished to determine whether Weber had correctly predicted the course of events in contemporary Russia without much reference to its past, relying mainly on comparative sociology. (Weber's knowledge of Russian history was thin, being derived mainly from one source, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu's *L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes*.)

The results of my inquiry appeared in *World Politics* in 1955 under the title "Max Weber and Russia." As I reread this essay I find that I

may have been too critical of Weber. I feel now that he was more correct in stressing bureaucratic continuity in the Russia of 1900 to 1920 than I had allowed. Even so, I believe today as I did then that he was misled by his sociological approach, which convinced him that under modern conditions, with the bureaucracy allegedly complete master, a revolution had become impossible. His view of the 1905 Revolution as serving only to ensconce the Imperial bureaucracy more solidly in power was wide off the mark. Even more wrongheaded was his dismissal of both the March and November Revolutions of 1917 as "swindles." Talcott Parsons, the leading Weber scholar in the United States, told me several years after my article had appeared that it had made him angry and that he had intended to write a rebuttal, but he never wrote it and failed to tell me what had aroused his anger. I suspect it was my *lèse-majesté*.

The introduction to Fletcher's *Of the Russe Commonwealth* is the only essay in this collection devoted to medieval Russia. It resulted from a suggestion by John Fine, then a graduate student at Harvard and now professor at the University of Michigan, that I urge the Harvard University Press to reprint this scarce and important work. The Press agreed to do so on condition that I write an Introduction. Immersion in Fletcher's account of his travels to Muscovy proved a fascinating experience, for it revealed the antecedents in the late sixteenth century of many institutions and practices which I have identified in Imperial and Soviet Russia. It demonstrated the continuities in Russian political history and confirmed to me, once again, the validity of the historical approach.

"Karamzin's Conception of the Monarchy," written in 1956 for a Festschrift in honor of Michael Karpovich, was the byproduct of a book on which I was working at the time. In it I sought to throw light on Russian liberal conservatism, an ideology which I find particularly congenial but which is largely ignored by historians. The findings were incorporated in *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*, published in 1959.

I do not recall what made me turn to the Jewish policies of Catherine II. It probably was dissatisfaction with the dominant trend in Jewish historiography which depicts the treatment of Jews by Gentiles primarily in terms of pro-Semitic and anti-Semitic attitudes. The status of Jews in Imperial Russia, at any rate until the late nineteenth century, was, in fact, imbedded in the practices of an autocratic and caste-conscious regime. To illustrate this point, I studied the Jewish policies of Catherine, arguably the most liberal of Russian rulers. I was surprised to learn that in some respects her Jewish legislation was the most enlightened in contemporary Europe. The failure of her attempts to integrate Jews into Russian society as equals showed (as she herself realized) that

personal feelings were not the only or even the main consideration in Russian policies toward the Jews.

"*Narodnichestvo*: A Semantic Inquiry" resulted from the study of the life and thought of Peter Struve, which occupied me for the better part of twenty years. Working with late nineteenth century sources I became aware that *narodnichestvo* (Populism), which like other historians of Russia I had been using to describe an allegedly anti-Marxist, agrarian, "utopian" socialism, was a polemical term coined in the 1890s for their rivals by those Russian radicals who viewed themselves as Marx's only true disciples. I concluded that the phenomenon it purported to define did not actually exist. I am convinced that my interpretation was and remains correct: but linguistic habits die hard and I cannot claim to have persuaded the profession.

In the course of my work on Struve's biography, I had to deal with the young Lenin with whom Struve had had close relations. Researches into this subject revealed that Lenin's Bolshevism was rooted in part in his early connections with the Peoples' Will, which were much closer than usually allowed, and in part in the intellectual crisis which he had experienced in 1899–1900 when he lost faith in the basic principles of Social Democracy: reliance on the working class as the motor force of the Revolution, and cooperation with the liberal "bourgeoisie."

My general interpretation of the Russian political tradition is to be found in my books, notably *Russia Under the Old Regime*, the biography of Peter Struve, and the forthcoming *History of the Russian Revolution*. The essays included in this book deal in depth with related subjects for which there was not enough space in the books. They elaborate my views on Russia's political tradition, a subject which I continue to believe holds the key to the understanding of the present and future of a country which plays so large a role in the destiny of the modern world.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Giles Fletcher's *Of the Russe Commonwealth (1591)*

In the first edition of that encyclopedia of early English travels, Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589), among descriptions of distant lands in America and Asia, one may find a document dated 1555 which bears the curious title, "Charter of the Merchants of Russia, granted upon the discovery of the said country by King Philip and Queen Mary." That the English of the mid-sixteenth century should have regarded themselves as the discoverers of Russia tells us not only of their provincialism but also of their commercial cunning. Actually, Russia had been "discovered" a good century earlier by continental Europeans, and the English were not entirely unaware of that fact. Their insistence on priority represented, as we shall see, an attempt to buttress an insecure claim to a monopoly on the trade with Russia through the northern route. Nevertheless, the concept of a "discovery" of Russia is not entirely to be dismissed, for it reflects both English and continental feeling of that time. Until the fifteenth century, Russia had indeed been a *terra incognita*, a part of legendary Tartary, the home of Scythians and Sarmatians, about whom Europeans knew no more than about the inhabitants of the continents in fact newly discovered by the great maritime explorers of that age.

There was a time when the principalities of Russia had maintained close commercial and dynastic links with the rest of Christendom. In the eleventh century, Kiev's ruling family married into the royal houses of France, England, and Norway. But a succession of disasters resulting principally from recurrent invasions of Turkic and Mongolian nomads from inner Asia snapped one by one the links connecting Russians with the Catholic world. The final disaster was the great Mongolian invasion of 1236–1241 which ravaged most of Russia and placed it under the

Originally appeared as the introduction to Giles Fletcher's *Of the Russe Commonwealth (1591)*, Harvard University Press, 1966.

sovereignty of the Khan. The Russians were henceforth compelled to turn eastward. It was to the east that their princes had to travel to make their humiliating homage and pay their tribute, and it was there that they learned new means of government and warfare. Between the middle of the thirteenth and the middle of the fifteenth century, Russia was effectively separated from Europe and integrated into the oriental world. Infrequent travelers to Mongolia or China crossed lands once inhabited by Russians in the south and west, but they stayed away from the forests of the upper Volga and Oka, to which regions the center of Russian population and statehood had shifted. Plano Carpini, who journeyed to Mongolia in 1246, left in his account only passing references to the Russians, where he depicts them as abused vassals of the Tatars: any Tatar, he says, no matter how lowly, treats the best born Russian with utter disdain. Willem van Ruysbroek, who repeated Carpini's trip seven years later, speaks of Russia as a province "full of woods in all places . . . [which] has been wasted all over by the Tatars and as yet is daily wasted by them."[1] Given the hazards of medieval travel, there was nothing in these casual references to encourage European interest in Russia.

If Russia lost contact with Europe as a result of Mongol-Turkic conquests, she re-established this contact as soon as she had emancipated herself from the invaders and organized a sovereign state. This event occurred in the second half of the fifteenth century. With startling rapidity what had been an impoverished and maltreated frontier area of the Mongol Empire transformed itself into the most powerful eastern Christian kingdom. Some Russian theoreticians even began to claim for the Grand Dukes of Moscow—descendants of princelings who so recently had been humiliated by the Khans—the imperial title which had lapsed with the death of the last Byzantine emperor during the Turkish seizure of Constantinople in 1453. This claim was not very seriously taken by westerners when they first learned of it. But the existence of a large Christian kingdom in the east could not well be ignored by a continent threatened with Ottoman invasion. From the middle of the fifteenth century, Papal and Imperial legates found their way to Moscow in search of diplomatic or military alliances. At the same time, the first Russian missions appeared in western Europe: they arranged for the marriage of Ivan III to the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, then a refugee in Rome (1472), brought to Moscow architects and decorators to construct the new Kremlin, and engaged in a variety of negotiations. In this manner the old links between Russia and the other states of the Western world were gradually reforged.

On the European mind these first contacts produced quite an exotic impression. Owing to long commercial and military dealings with the

Tatars, Turks, and Persians, the Russians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries presented a completely oriental appearance. Their nobles wore clothes imported from Persia, and their soldiers carried weapons copied from the Tatars. Russian women painted their faces with garish colors quite unlike anything seen in Europe. The visual impression of strangeness, recorded by virtually every early visitor to Russia, was reinforced by curious customs. The practice of kowtowing before superiors, imposed on the Russians by the Tatars and retained after independence, astounded visitors as much as it repelled them. The absolute power of the ruler, the habit of even the highest nobles of referring to themselves as the monarch's "slaves" (*kholopy*), the prevalence of sexual promiscuity—these and many other features of Muscovite Russia amazed all visitors, regardless of background. Russia appeared to them not as a European country, but as what one historian calls "a Christian-exotic country of the New World."[2] This initial impression never quite lost its hold on the European imagination. It continued to influence attitudes many years later, after Russia had become an integral member of the European cultural and political community. When an angry Castlereagh, in 1815, called the thoroughly Frenchified Alexander I a "Calmuck prince," he was unconsciously reverting to this tradition.

The rediscovery of Russia produced a sizeable body of literature which in Russian historiography is known as *skazaniia inostrantsev* (accounts of foreigners). This literature, like the whole body of travel accounts of the age of discovery, has both specific strengths and weaknesses as a historical source. The early explorers were subjective, intolerant, and often uncritical, but they also approached foreign lands with a freshness of vision that comes only once to individual cultures as to individual persons. They saw more sharply and with less preconditioning than did their successors. The picture of Russia which emerges from these accounts is strikingly consistent—so much so that the historian Kliuchevskii felt justified in preparing on their basis a composite description of Muscovy.[3]

The most important of these early accounts was written by the Imperial ambassador, Sigismund von Herberstein, who traveled to Russia twice in the reign of Vassilii III (1517 and 1526). His book, *Commentarii rerum Moscoviticarum*, appeared in Vienna in 1549 and ran through several editions. It was based on good knowledge of the written sources as well as intelligent personal observations, and it provided westerners with the first serious description of Russian history, geography, government, and customs.[4] Herberstein's book was the main source of continental knowledge of Russia in the sixteenth century, but by no means the only one.[5]

The English were at first not greatly interested in this body of information. They did not even bother to translate Herberstein's book, which within a few years of publication in Latin had come out in Italian, German, and Czech editions: for in the middle of the sixteenth century they had neither religious, nor diplomatic, nor commercial relations with Russia. England's first encounter with that country was an accidental byproduct of a search for a route to China, and for that reason bore the earmarks of a genuine maritime discovery.

In the 1550's England experienced an economic depression caused by a sudden drop in the export of textiles. The merchants, who had come to depend on foreign markets, were now compelled to undertake in earnest maritime explorations in which England so far had lagged behind both Spain and Portugal. Since the Spanish and Portuguese had prior claim to the best southern routes, the English had to seek other, more risky ones. One of them was a northeast passage to China. Some of the outstanding geographers of the time, such as the cartographer Mercator, the explorer Sebastian Cabot, and the mathematician and astrologer John Dee, believed that such a passage was feasible. Basing their reasoning on the best available evidence, they concluded that the Asian continent terminated in the vicinity of the river Ob, where the coastline turned sharply south toward China. If that was indeed the case, then by sailing northeast, past the tip of Scandinavia, it would be possible to reach the great Chinese markets in a relatively short time. Encouraged by this prospect, a group of entrepreneurs equipped three vessels and in the summer of 1553 sent them in search of the passage to China by way of the North Sea. The expedition was under the joint command of Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor.

The vessels of this expedition, having rounded the tip of Norway, sailed into waters previously unexplored by westerners. There they soon became separated. Two ships, including the one with Willoughby aboard, encountered adverse winds and decided to drop anchor off the Kola Peninsula. Unprepared for the severity of the northern winter and unable to establish contact with natives, Willoughby and all his companions later froze to death. Their ships, intact but without a sign of life aboard, were discovered the next spring by Laplanders and eventually returned to England. Chancellor, in the meantime, having waited in vain for his companions in the third ship, sailed on into the White Sea, and on August 24, 1553, sighted the Russian monastery of St. Nicholas at the mouth of the Dvina River, where he landed.

The English travelers touched Russian soil at a propitious moment. The country, led by the ambitious and belligerent Ivan IV, was in great need of military supplies and specialists with which to pursue war against the Tatars. Russia's western neighbors had for some time previous

imposed an effective embargo on the shipment of European craftsmen and weapons, for they feared that Moscow, having defeated the Tatars, would once more begin to expand in their direction. By opening the northern route, the English had made it possible to break this embargo, and to establish a new and dependable route connecting Russia with the outside world.[6] It is not surprising, therefore, that they were warmly welcomed. As soon as news of Chancellor's landing had reached Ivan, he ordered the visitors brought to him. In Moscow, where he was received with much display of friendliness, Chancellor learned that the Russian government was prepared to open negotiations for the purpose of granting the English merchants commercial privileges. With this assurance, the sponsors of Chancellor's expedition founded, on his return, a regular company, popularly known as the Muscovy Company, which received a royal charter and became the prototype of the great English joint-stock companies for overseas trade. In the same year (1555) the company received liberal privileges from Ivan IV which exempted it from the payment of customs and other dues, and in effect confirmed the monopoly on all English trade with Russia granted it by the English charter. Subsequent grants extended the company's rights to trade with Persia and with the Baltic port of Narva, held by the Russians between 1566 and 1581. The port of St. Nicholas was reserved for the company's exclusive use.[7] Under the auspices of the Company, Russia and England developed a lively maritime trade which greatly contributed to the economic development of the entire Russian north.[8]

The English soon discovered that there was in fact no northeast passage to China: the Asian continent stretched far beyond the river Ob, and in any event the northern waters at a certain degree of longitude (not far east of St. Nicholas) were impassable because of ice. But through Russia English traders unexpectedly found a land route to the commercial centers of the Middle East. The establishment of the Muscovy Company coincided with the conquest by the Russians of the entire length of the Volga River. By capturing Astrakhan, in 1556, the Russians planted themselves on the Caspian Sea, through which there was easy access to Persia and Central Asia. One year after the fall of Astrakhan, Anthony Jenkinson carried out a journey through Moscow to Turkestan and a few years later to Persia. Before long, amazed Englishmen began to receive oriental goods by way of the Northern Sea: "The silks of the Medes to come by Muscovia into England is a strange hearing," Sir Thomas Smith wrote to Sir William Cecil in 1564.[9]

The oriental trade through Russia came to an end in 1580. The route had proved too hazardous, and in that year another group of merchants formed the Turkey (or Levant) Company, which undertook trade with the Middle East through the Mediterranean. The Muscovy Company

gave up this part of its business and came to concentrate entirely on an import and export trade with Russia, from which it derived no mean profit. The English brought into Russia manufactured goods (mostly textiles), metals and other mineral products useful for war (tin, lead, saltpeter, sulphur, and gunpowder), and colonial products (sugar, fruits, etc.). They purchased Russian furs, seal oil, tallow, wax, cordage, and even caviar. The Russian monarchy was in general well disposed toward the English merchants, causing by its patronage the displeasure of some high Russian officials. When Ivan died, the head of the foreign office, Andrei Shchelkalov, mocked a member of the Muscovy Company: "And now your English tsar is gone."[10]

Under the protection of the Russian monarchy, the company was allowed to establish in Moscow and several provincial towns permanent agencies staffed by its merchants and clerks. In some instances, agents of the company stayed in Russia for many years, learned fluent Russian, and became first-rate Russian experts. In this manner, within thirty years after Chancellor had stepped ashore at St. Nicholas, England knew more about Russia than did any other country in Europe. This expertise lends British accounts particular value. In general, they are both more factual and less partisan than the accounts of Germans, Poles, or Italians. Some of them are indeed nothing more than intelligence reports prepared by and for merchants who cared only for information helpful in business. They reported distances between towns, measures and weights, coinage, available commodities, the customs and practices of their Russian counterparts, and the institutions of local and central government with which they had to deal.

This fact must be kept in mind in evaluating English accounts, lest they be charged with gross prejudice, for they are virtually unanimous in their condemnation of Russia. Although a number of English residents became thoroughly assimilated, only one of them is known to have chosen to remain—and he was a man who faced prosecution for financial misdeeds. To the English of the time, Russia was a barbarous country, much more so than the other countries of the Orient with which they then entered into relations.[11] Their impressions are well summed up in three rhymed letters which the poet George Turberville sent to his London friends from Moscow, where he was serving in 1568 as Thomas Randolph's secretary:

> Their manners are so Turkie-like, the men so full of guile,
> The women wanton, temples stuffed with idols that defile
> The seats that sacred ought to be, the customs are so quaint
> As if I would describe the whole, I fear my pen would faint.
> In sum, I say, I never saw a prince that so did reign

Nor people so beset with saints, yet all but vile and vain:
Wild Irish are as civil as the Russies in their kind,
Hard choice which is the best of both, each bloody, rude
and blind.
If thou be wise, as wise thou art, and wilt be ruled by me,
Live still at home, and covet not those barbarous coasts
to see.[12]

Despite the advantages which both sides derived from it, Anglo-Russian trade ran into increasing difficulties. These difficulties stemmed in part from different attitudes towards commerce and in part from growing Russian dissatisfaction with the monopoly enjoyed by the Muscovy Company on the northern route.

To England, trade with Russia was all along purely a business proposition. If Queen Elizabeth granted the Muscovy Company privileges and diplomatic support it was not because she expected to derive from its activities any immediate political advantage, but because in England then, as now, foreign trade and the well-being of the state were inseparable. This was not the case in Russia. Trade in general, and foreign trade in particular, played a small part in the life of the state, whose preoccupation was still with political and military matters. Ivan IV welcomed English merchants and granted them privileges not so much because he was interested in trade as such as because with their help he could break the Polish-German-Swedish blockade isolating him from the west. Although he personally derived a fair profit from doing business with England, as an autocratic ruler claiming to own everybody and everything in his domain he treated commerce as only one of several ways of enhancing his power and wealth.

These different attitudes led to misunderstandings which, compounded by Ivan's worsening paranoia, caused in 1567 the first crisis in Anglo-Russian relations. In that year, Ivan, feeling menaced by internal and external enemies, requested Elizabeth to enter into an alliance with him and to offer him asylum in England in the event he were forced to flee. The Queen promptly granted the request for asylum, but she hedged on the matter of alliances, for she saw no point in getting involved in Ivan's quarrels with his neighbors. Infuriated by her evasive reply, Ivan began to apply pressure on the Muscovy Company, threatening to open Russia to other English merchants. Under the pressure of the alarmed company, the Queen dispatched an embassy (1568–69) headed by Thomas Randolph which succeeded brilliantly in reconfirming the merchants' privileges and even adding new ones. The Muscovy Company was once more acknowledged the only English organization permitted to trade with Russia both through St. Nicholas and the newly acquired Baltic

port of Narva. In addition, its agents and properties were placed under the protection of the *oprichnina*, the part of the government under the tsar's direct control. Ivan, who used trade privileges as diplomatic leverage, apparently hoped that the generous new charter would persuade the Queen to grant his request for an alliance. But when this hope was again disappointed, he began to make new difficulties. In a violent letter which he wrote to the Queen in 1570, he clearly stated his political position:

> We thought that you lord it over your domain, and rule by yourself, and seek honor for yourself and profit for your country. And it is for this reason that we wanted to engage in these affairs with you. But now we see that there are men who do rule beside you, and not men but trading boors (*muzhiki torgovye*) who do not think of the profit of our safety, honor, and lands, but seek their own merchant profit. And you remain in your maidenly estate like a common maid. . . . And if it be so, then we shall set these affairs to the side. And the trading boors who abandoned our royal heads and our royal honor and the benefit of our lands for their own merchant affairs, they shall see how they will now trade. For the realm of Moscow had not been wanting without their English goods.[13]

To the English ambassador, Anthony Jenkinson, whom the Queen sent in 1572 to patch up relations, Ivan also complained that the English government allowed "merchants' matters" to take precedence over "princely affairs."[14] In this manner, the Company time and again found itself a helpless victim of international diplomacy.

To compound its troubles, the Company had to confront a challenge from independent English merchants who resented its monopoly. Once the trade with Russia got under way in earnest, such merchants sought to persuade the Russian government that it would profit more by opening its ports to all comers. Ivan IV, who in general opposed these interlopers, for a while (in 1568, during his quarrel with Elizabeth) let them have their way. A number of highly placed Russians, moreover, were known to hold anti-monopolistic views, and this explains the Company's constant stress on its "discovery" of Russia. Even more difficult to control was the private trade carried on by the Company's employees. English agents, past and present, clerks, and even simple sailors, engaged regularly in a lucrative side business of importing and exporting goods legally reserved to the Company. In some instances, these interlopers entered into partnerships with Russian officials who thereby became personally interested in terminating the Company's monopoly. The Russian government, accustomed to collective responsibility, tended to treat the Company as liable for debts incurred by individual Englishmen, whether

or not they were acting on the Company's behalf and in its name. The Company's refusal to honor these debts led to constant recriminations and occasional confiscations of its property.

The death of Ivan IV in 1584 by no means resolved these difficulties. The new government of Fedor Ivanovich, in which effective authority was exercised by Boris Godunov, was less concerned with diplomatic alliances which had so much harmed Russo-English relations under Ivan. But it was unfavorably inclined to the Company's exclusive commercial privileges secured under Ivan which it considered economically detrimental to Russia. In this attitude Godunov was supported by the head of the office of foreign affairs, Andrei Shchelkalov.

In 1586 Elizabeth dispatched to Moscow a new embassy, headed by Jerome Horsey. Horsey was an old Moscow hand, having been there on Company business since 1572. He spoke fluent Russian, a language which he considered "the most copious and elegant in the world."[15] He was also sufficiently close to the Russian court to have been employed a short time before on a delicate and secret diplomatic mission on its behalf in Livonia. Horsey in part re-established the Company's privileges, but immediately new difficulties arose. One of the causes was a financial dispute between Shchelkalov and an English trader by the name of Anthony Marsh.[16] Clearly, until the powerful minister was placated, the affairs of the Company would not prosper. To settle this matter, as well as to re-negotiate some of the general issues of Anglo-Russian trade, Elizabeth in the summer of 1588 dispatched Giles Fletcher as her ambassador to Moscow.

Fletcher was born in Watford, Hertfordshire, in 1546, the son of a clergyman. He received his initial education at Eton, and in 1565 proceeded to King's College, Cambridge, where he remained for the next twenty years. At the university he took an active part in academic politics, wrote some Latin poetry, and eventually became lecturer in Greek and Dean of Arts at King's.[17] In 1579 he turned to law. In two years he earned his doctorate, and then entered politics, apparently under the patronage of Thomas Randolph. It is known that Fletcher served in Parliament (1584–85), as well as in the treasury of the City of London (1586–87), and participated in embassies to Scotland (1586) and Hamburg (1587), the former headed by Randolph.[18] (It is probably to Randolph, himself an ex-ambassador to Ivan, that Fletcher owed his Moscow appointment.) The combination of literary and academic training with legal and political experience accounts in no small measure for the high quality of his book.

Fletcher received his royal papers on June 6, 1588, and departed, accompanied by twenty Englishmen, a short time afterwards. He carried with him several letters from the Queen, her ministers, and the Company to the Tsar, his wife, and Boris Godunov, as well as the customary presents.[19]

Fletcher's mission—for a variety of reasons, most of them beyond his control—had a poor beginning. He landed at the Dvina estuary in the middle of September, and then slowly made his way to Moscow. The journey of some 650 miles took over two months. Contrary to accepted custom, the embassy was neither welcomed officially at the gates of Moscow upon its arrival on November 25, nor escorted into the city. The quarters which the Russian authorities assigned the ambassador proved unsatisfactory; Fletcher later described them as "very unhandsome and unwholesome."[20] He was allowed for three weeks to cool his heels under conditions of virtual house arrest before being asked to his first audience at the Kremlin. The audience got off to a bad start when Fletcher refused to pronounce the full title of the Tsar, allegedly because it was too long to be remembered but in fact (as he later admitted) because it was longer than that of the English Queen. The Russians would not allow the audience to proceed until he did so, and eventually he gave in.[21] This incident did not improve relations. They became extremely strained the next day when the gifts Fletcher had brought were returned to his lodgings and unceremoniously dumped at his feet.[22]

The principal reason for Fletcher's unfriendly reception was diplomatic. Shortly before his arrival, the Russian government had opened negotiations in Moscow with Spanish and German missions which tried to enroll the Russians in an anti-Turkish alliance. They seem to have succeeded in persuading Godunov that England would soon be defeated by Spain and Elizabeth deposed. Apparently, the news of the defeat of the Armada, which had occurred while Fletcher was en route to Russia (August 1588), did not reach Moscow until sometime later that winter. Another factor was the presence in Moscow of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremiah, with whom the government was negotiating the establishment of a Russian Patriarchate. While talks with him were in progress—that is, until January 26, 1589, when Job was named the Patriarch of Moscow—other issues were relegated to the background. . . . The particular indignities and discomforts which the embassy experienced can probably be traced directly to the hostility of Andrei Shchelkalov, who, as head of the foreign office, was in charge of the visitors. The English did not improve matters by returning niggardly gifts for the exceptionally rich ones the Russians had sent Queen Elizabeth the previous year. All these factors hampered and delayed Fletcher's mission. But his loss is our gain, for the many months he spent in

idleness permitted him to study closely the country and its inhabitants, and to acquire the information which lends his accounts permanent importance.

Fletcher was called for a second audience in the middle of January 1589, at which time Shchelkalov raised the issue of English debts. At about this time news of the English triumph over the Armada reached Moscow, and the atmosphere thawed considerably. On April 22, Fletcher went to his third and final audience in the Kremlin. He was given a new charter of privileges, which, without meeting all the Company's demands, was on the whole quite satisfactory. The Company in effect had to give up its monopoly of the northern route, but it won exemption from responsibility for the debts of individual English merchants. Control over its activities was also shifted from the foreign office, headed by the unfriendly Shchelkalov, to the Treasury.[23] There was some additional difficulty with the Office of Foreign Affairs a few days later when Fletcher insisted on delivering personally to the Tsar a note brought in the interval by courier from England. The foreign office refused the request on the grounds that Fletcher had already been formally dismissed. In the end he had to capitulate, and on May 6, 1589 was allowed to depart for Vologda, a major depot of the Company. There he spent two months waiting for the reply from Moscow to the latest note, and for the permit to sail. The permit and reply arrived sometime after July 17, and Fletcher, in the company of Horsey and Marsh, embarked for England soon afterwards.[24] The party arrived in England in late August or early September.

Fletcher's experience in Russia had not been a happy one, and he had good reason to dislike that country. This fact has been noted by historians, and there can be little question that to some extent his critical attitude derives from the treatment he received. Shortly upon his return to England, in a conversation with a Cambridge friend, he is reported to have "heartily expressed his thankfulness to God for his safe return from so great a danger":

> for the poets cannot fancy Ulysses more glad to be come out of the den of Polyphemus, than he was to be rid out of the power of such a barbarous prince; who, counting himself by a proud and voluntary mistake emperor of all the nations, cared not for the law of all nations; and who was so habited in blood, that, had he cut off this ambassador's head, he and his friends might have sought their own amends; but the question is, where he would have found it?[25]

While in Russia, Fletcher kept a journal[26] which furnished the basis of his book. We know from Fletcher himself that he composed a draft

of the *Russe Commonwealth* during the return voyage from Russia. . . . Unfortunately, neither the journal nor this first draft seems to have survived, and all the texts known to us are edited versions, prepared during the interval between Fletcher's arrival in England and the appearance of the book some two years later.

The earliest reference to the *Russe Commonwealth* can be found in the first edition of Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations,* which came out toward the end of 1589. Hakluyt provides a brief description of Fletcher's embassy, enumerates certain terms of the treaty signed by Fletcher in Moscow, and adds: "The said Ambassador . . . as I understand, hath drawen a book, intituled *Of the Russe Commonwealth,*" the chapters of which he then recapitulates. Hakluyt's list contains 24 chapters, four less than are to be found in the published edition of 1591. Actually, since one of the chapters of the 1591 version (chapter 22) is divided in the Hakluyt list into two separate chapters (one on the liturgy and another on the sacraments), the Hakluyt list is five chapters shorter. The missing chapters are 4 through 6, 20, and 26. At the end of his notice, Hakluyt adds: "The book it selfe he [Giles Fletcher] thought not good, for divers considerations, to make publike at this time."[27]

What these "considerations" were it is not difficult to surmise in view of what happened after the *Russe Commonwealth* did appear in 1591. The Muscovy Company must have exerted considerable pressure on Fletcher not to publish his account, so critical of Russia, from fear that it would further jeopardize its trading privileges. For the time being, Fletcher had to content himself with two reports to the Queen, one describing the course of his embassy and the other suggesting the means of improving the position of English traders in Russia. . . . In 1590, his scholarly interests turned to native history, and he conceived a plan of writing a Latin account of the reign of Elizabeth. We have a letter of his to Lord Burghley (William Cecil) dated November 3, 1590, in which he outlines his project and requests patronage as well as access to state papers.[28] For some reason, however, the project fell through, and Fletcher returned to his Russian manuscript.

In the Library of Cambridge University (Queens College MS 25) there is a manuscript of Fletcher's *Of the Russe Commonwealth* prefaced by an autograph dedication to the Queen. The table of contents of this manuscript lists the same number of chapters as does Hakluyt, that is, twenty-four, but with the difference that the two chapters on liturgy and sacraments are now consolidated into one, and a new chapter (corresponding to chapter 26 in the 1591 edition) on "The Emperours domestiqve or priuat behaviour" is added. The captions of the chapters in the Hakluyt list and Cambridge manuscript are virtually identical. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 20 of the 1591 edition are still missing, and so

are many scattered passages, short and long, found in the 1591 edition. The Cambridge manuscript thus seems to be a slightly expanded version of the original draft.[29]

A comparison of the Cambridge manuscript and the book published in 1591 reveals one fact of particular interest. Nearly all the references to historical sources made in the 1591 edition, and indeed virtually all the historical background of that edition, are missing from the manuscript. This fact strongly suggests that Fletcher did the bulk of his research on Russia after he had returned to England, during the interval which elapsed between the writing of the Cambridge manuscript and the publication of his book. On the basis of this research he now wrote chapters 4, 5, 6 and 20, and inserted numerous shorter historical passages in the other chapters.

The Russian historian S. M. Seredonin identifies the following sources as having been consulted by Fletcher:[30] Herberstein's *Commentaries;* Pachymeres' *History of the Paleologues;*[31] Martin Kromer's *History of Poland;*[32] Nicephorus Gregoras, *History of Byzantium;*[33] A. Bonfinius' *History of Hungary;* [34] the so-called *Berossus Babilonicus,*[35] and Saxo Grammaticus' *History of the Danes.*[36] Table 1.1 provides references to the most important passages added to the Cambridge manuscript.

Fletcher, it may be noted, was neither a profound nor an accurate scholar. His research is much inferior to his powers of observation, and the parts of his book based on study of other histories have been most severely criticized.

There are a number of other differences between the manuscript and the book. Fletcher's printer made many errors, especially in setting proper names and numbers. For this reason, the manuscript is more accurate in rendering Russian terms. In the book version, Fletcher occasionally softened some opinions, especially as concerns Russian religion.

Fletcher's life after 1591 was not particularly eventful. He wrote a volume of mediocre verse, *Licia, or Poems on Love* (probably 1593), and *Israel redux* (published posthumously in 1667) in which he argued that the Caspian Tatars were descendants of the ten tribes of Israel. Having served for a while as treasurer of St. Paul's Church in London, he obtained a lease on a provincial rectory. He had some trouble during the Essex rebellion, but was found innocent and released. He died in February 1611, shortly after he had carried out diplomatic negotiations with Denmark on behalf of the Eastland merchants. Fletcher's sons, Giles the Younger and Phineas, were also poets, both somewhat more prominent than he. Even more famous is the son of his brother Richard, the dramatist John Fletcher. His own reputation today rests entirely on the *Russe Commonwealth,* a book which occupies a unique place in the entire foreign literature on Muscovite Russia.

Table 1.1 PASSAGES ADDED TO CAMBRIDGE MANUSCRIPT

Passage	*Fletcher's pages*	*Probable source*
Origin of Slavs and Russians	1–2	Kromer, Book I, ch. VII–VIII
Description of the Russian winter	4V	Herberstein, vol. II, p. 2
Etymology of "Moscow"	12	Berossus, f. 5
Number of houses in Moscow	12V–13	Herberstein, vol. II, p. 5
Story of Novgorod slaves	13–13V	Herodotus, Book IV, ch. III–IV Herberstein, vol. II, pp. 26–27
Vladimir's marriage to Harald's daughter	14	Saxo Grammaticus, p. 370
Origin of Russian dynasty and its Hungarian links	14V–15	Bonfinius, vol. II, Book VIII
The crowning ritual	17–19V	Herberstein, vol. I, pp. 39–42 (also J. Horsey)
Origin of Russian language and the name "Slavs"	48V–49	Kromer, Book I, ch. XII
Expansion of Moscow	61V–62V	Herberstein, vol. I, pp. 21–32
Origin of name "Poles" and "Laches"	65–65V	Kromer, Book I, ch. XIII
Tatar wars against the Hungarians	67V–68	Bonfinius, vol. II, Book VIII
Tatar, Turkish, and Russian soldiers compared	68V–69	Herberstein, vol. I, p. 98
Tatar means of waging war	71V	Laonicus Chalcocondylas in Nicephorus, pp. 336–338
Story of Nogas	72	Pachymeres, Book I, pp. 347–348
Origin of Turks	72V–73	Laonicus Chalcocondylas in Nicephorus, pp. 277–279
Story of "Slata Baba"	76–76V	Herberstein, vol. II, p. 41
Conversion of Russia	79V	Kromer, Book III Herberstein, vol. I, pp. 16–17

Of the Russe Commonwealth consists of three unequal parts. The first (chapters 1–4) contains a geographic description, the second (chapters 5–25) an analysis of the state and its institutions, and the third (chapters 26–28) an account of customs and manners. The first and third parts are short, and the bulk of the narrative (184 of the 232 pages) is devoted

to the second, which in turn can be divided into four subsections: the government (including the nobility and fiscal apparatus), the judiciary, the armed forces, and the church. This structure, as outlined by Fletcher himself in the table of contents . . . indicates that he intended his book as a systematic treatise. This feature alone distinguishes it from all other foreign accounts.

Seredonin, having analyzed the sources Fletcher used, concluded that he was "undoubtedly the most erudite of all the foreigners who in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had written about Russia."[37] Of course, the real value of his book derives not from his reading, done, as we now know, mostly after his return, but from the knowledge obtained either from personal observation or from conversations with agents of the Muscovy Company resident in Russia. He seems to have profited especially from talks with Horsey, who accompanied him on the return voyage. Indeed, Horsey afterwards claimed that he had furnished Fletcher with "all" the information for his book.[38] Another informant may have been Marsh, who had traded with Siberia and may have supplied Fletcher with facts about the Tatars and the eastern borderlands in general. Fletcher's account may be said to represent the cumulative knowledge and experience which the agents of the Muscovy Company had acquired over thirty-five years of commercial contact with Russians and their government.

Fletcher was not content, however, to rely on information supplied by others, and went out of the way to learn on his own.[39] His descriptions are sometimes introduced by "I saw," "I heard," or "I talked to." He subjects a Russian clergyman to an examination on the Bible and the essentials of Christian doctrine. He asks a Russian merchant the reason for his reluctance to display his goods. He talks to his servant about a conversation the latter has had with a Russian. All this information Fletcher noted down, and he did so with considerable accuracy. How reliable he is may be judged from those parts of his narrative which lend themselves to verification from independent sources. His rendering of Russian words, names, and even sentences is precise, as are his accounts of Russian customs and dress. Some of the statements about his treatment in Moscow are also confirmed by contemporary Russian records. He reports rumors circulating in Moscow that the young prince Dimitrii, the sole successor, is in danger of being assassinated by persons interested in seizing the throne.[40] If this statement does not solve the mystery of Dimitrii's death, which occurred two years after Fletcher's departure from Moscow, it does explain why Russian opinion should have immediately blamed Boris Godunov for it. Anyone who read *Of the Russe Commonwealth* at the time of its appearance should have been prepared both for Godunov's succession to the throne (1598), and the

civil war which broke out shortly after his death (1605).[41] Naturally, Fletcher is somewhat less dependable when dealing with subjects which fall in the category of state secrets, such as the revenues or military capabilities of the Russian state. But even on these matters he reports so intelligently that his information constitutes to this day an indispensable historic source.[42]

From the point of view of the modern historian, the least useful contributions of Fletcher's book are the geographic and historical facts reported in the opening five chapters, most of which he seems to have learned after his return from Russia. The British merchants were well acquainted with the northern territories linking Moscow with the Dvina estuary, along which they traveled and traded, but the rest of the vast country they knew largely from hearsay. Their information, such as depicted in Jenkinson's map of Russia of 1562, which Fletcher used extensively, has long since been superseded.[43] Much of the same holds true of the historical background which Fletcher sketches in chapter 5.

The central part of the book devoted to the state and its institutions (chapters 6–20) represents the first systematic study of the Russian political and social system ever undertaken. Its superiority over all preceding foreign accounts, Herberstein's included, lies in the fact that Fletcher was not content to describe the surface appearance of things, but insisted on finding and laying bare the inner mechanism of the system. He grasps the relations between various, seemingly disparate institutions and practices which other early travelers had missed entirely. That Russia was a "tyranny" and that its tsar had absolute authority to dispose of the lives and properties of his subjects was a commonplace in the literature of the time.[44] But only Fletcher among the travelers bothered to ask how such a government functioned and by what means it retained power. He perceives a connection between the authority of the monarchy, the position of the estates, and the general cultural level of the nation. He understands the political significance of the fiscal measures devised by the Russian government, as well as the various techniques employed to keep control of the conquered borderland regions. His whole analysis of political institutions is conceived in surprisingly modern, one may almost say sociological, terms. Indeed, if one were not afraid of modernizing, one could describe *Of the Russe Commonwealth* as a pioneering study of what today is called totalitarianism. His concern with the exercise of political power in all its aspects makes his book a very important document in the history of European political thought.

Before dealing with Fletcher's account of the Russian political system it is necessary to say a few words about the premises from which he proceeds.

Fletcher was an Elizabethan, the product of an age which was keenly interested in itself and engaged, as it were, in constant self-discovery.[45] The emergence of Tudor absolutism on the one hand, and increased relations with other lands on the other, awakened a desire to know how England was ruled and what were the reasons that her government was so different from that of any other country with which Englishmen came in contact. The result was a body of literature, relatively small in the sixteenth century and voluminous in the seventeenth, which contributed greatly to the subsequent formulation of the English constitution. Fletcher's book must be viewed not only as one of the foreign accounts of Russia, but also, and perhaps above all, as a document of this genre. What it says of Russia tells us indirectly what Fletcher thinks of England, for, rightly or wrongly, he seems to have considered the two countries antithetical.

Fletcher viewed the English constitution from the position of a proponent of parliamentary monarchy, a position best expounded in the most famous work of Tudor political thought, Sir Thomas Smith's *The Commonwealth of England.*[46] Although Smith belonged to an earlier generation than Fletcher (he was thirty-three years Fletcher's senior), the two men had much in common. Like Fletcher, Smith was a Cantabrigian and a lawyer, one of the great lights of the university where he acquired a great reputation and left many disciples. Both combined literary pursuits with civil service, and both served on foreign embassies. Their respective books had a similar origin. While on a mission to France in the 1560's Smith conceived, as he put it, "a yearning for our commonwealth," and composed his treatise in order "to set forth almost the whole of its form, especially those points in which it differs from the others."[47] His book, like Fletcher's, was thus inspired by contact with a foreign state in which royal absolutism was the accepted form of government.

Smith's treatise, composed in 1565, first appeared in print in 1583, that is, at the very time when Fletcher entered government service. Its principal thesis was that the government of England was a fusion of the interests and rights of the king, lords, and commons as formally embodied in the institution of the parliament. In parliament rested full sovereignty, or, as Smith called it, "the most high and absolute power." In Smith's view, parliament was not a counterweight to the monarchy, but the common ground on which the monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic forces met. The sovereignty of the king was that of the king-in-parliament. In certain respects—foreign policy, military affairs, and the appointment of chief officials—the king acted independently; in others, such as passing laws, raising revenue, and dispensing justice, he acted in concert with the nobles and commons represented in parliament. In Smith's view, the nation and monarchy were joined in an indissoluble

community of interest. From this assumption followed a definition of a good and a bad king. A good king comes to power, "with the good will of the people," administers the commonwealth "by the laws of the same and by equity," and seeks "the profit of the people as much as his own." A tyrant, by contrast, "by force comes to the monarchy against the will of the people, breaks laws already made at his pleasure, makes others without the advice and consent of the people, and regards not the wealth of his communes but the advancement of himself, his faction, and kindred."[48] According to Smith, a ruler may qualify as a tyrant by being guilty of any one of these three malpractices.

Whether Smith was accurately portraying or idealizing Tudor practices is a matter which need not concern us here. The important fact is that his book acquired immediate popularity, running through several editions in quick succession. Many Englishmen saw in it a true description of their constitution, and it came to be treated as something of a manual for persons entering state service.[49] It is virtually certain that Fletcher, who in the 1580's had held a variety of political posts including membership in parliament, and who was also a scholar of wide interests, had read Smith's treatise. It is even probable that his *Of the Russe Commonwealth, or Maner of Governement by the Russe Emperour* was consciously conceived as a counterpart to Smith's *The Commonwealth of England, and manner of government thereof.*[50] If Smith wished to present what he understood as a genuine, that is, parliamentary monarchy, Fletcher wanted to depict its opposite: "a true and strange face of a tyrannical state, most unlike your own," as he wrote in the dedication to Queen Elizabeth, "without true knowledge of God, without written law, without common justice."

Fletcher, like Smith, assumes a good government to be a partnership between crown and nation. In Russia he finds no such relation. There the monarch does not, as Smith would want him to, "seek the profit of the people as much as his own." The Russian government is "plain tyrannical," for everything must work "to the behoof [i.e., advantage] of the Prince," the nobility and commons alike being "but storers for the Prince, all running in the end into the Emperors coffers" (pp. 20–20v). This is the central accusation Fletcher levies against the tsarist government; from this evil flow all its other vices. In his account, the tsarist government resembles as it were a monstrous vampire which sucks from the nation all wealth and robs it of all initiative.

Fletcher begins his description of Russian absolutism by pointing out that the tsar concentrates in his hands all "the principal points and matters of state wherein Sovereignty consists." He is the sole legislator, he appoints all officials and judges, and he has control over the country's foreign affairs. He is the framer of laws and their executor, and he carries

out both functions without being held accountable to any genuine parliamentary institution. The Russian councils, whether the Boyar Duma, or what he calls the "Sobor,"[51] he dismisses as impotent. Their function is not to initiate, influence, or even discuss pending laws, but merely to confirm laws which the monarch and his closest advisers had previously decided upon. All laws, he says, are "ever determined of before any public assembly or parliament be summoned" (p. 20v). "To propound bills what every man thinks good for the public benefit (as the manner is in England) the Rus Parliament allows no such custom nor liberty to subjects" (p. 23). Fletcher considers the Boyar Duma so intrinsic a part of the monarchical machinery that he places its description in the section devoted to the administration (chapter 11).

Fletcher attaches much importance to the position of the nobility, for he believes that a powerful noble estate with firm rights is essential to prevent the monarchy from degenerating into despotism. One of the central features of the Russian constitution, as he interprets it, is that the nobles, including those of the highest degree (that is, the descendants of the former appanage princes) are completely subordinated to the crown. In a penetrating analysis in Chapter 11, Fletcher describes the various means used to undermine the Russian nobility.

The first, and in his opinion most efficacious, of these means is to prevent the fusion of titles with offices. "As touching the public offices and magistracies of the realm, there is none hereditary, neither any so great nor so little in that country, but the bestowing of it is done immediately by the Emperor himself" (p. 21). The fact that many of the high officials are members of the great noble families does not deceive him, for he notes that every governor (or duke) has at his side a *d'iak* or secretary "to assist him or rather to direct him; for in executing of their commission, the diak does all" (p. 31). Furthermore, he observes, the government makes certain that no official is given an opportunity to ensconce himself in office. The "dukes and diaks are . . . changed ordinarily at every year's end. . . . They are men of themselves of no credit nor favor with the people where they govern, being neither born nor brought up among them, nor yet having inheritance of their own there or elsewhere" (pp. 31v–32). Any Englishman of the 1590's reading these lines would instantly compare the situation with that prevailing in his own country, where the local government was as a rule entrusted to officials (lieutenant-governors and the deputies) who were native to the region, and held in it extensive properties.

In the second place, the Russian monarchy by a great variety of means assures the disintegration of the great noble families. Among these, Fletcher mentions measures which historians have come to regard as instrumental in the monarchy's triumph over the old aristocracy:

preferential treatment of the service gentry, the establishment of the *oprichnina*,[52] and the forceful transfer of nobles from their patrimonial estates to distant provinces "where they might have neither favor, nor authority, not being native nor well known there" (p. 26v). The tsar also forces noble women into convents "to keep them unmarried from continuing the blood or stock which he would have extinguished" (p. 89v).

By these measures, partly political and partly social, the Russian monarchy has reduced the nobility to a condition in which it poses no threat. "Now [the nobles] hold their authorities, lands, lives and all at the Emperor's pleasure, as the rest do" (p. 25; cf. p. 46). The contrast with the vigorous and self-confident English nobility of Elizabethan times is as obvious as it must have been intentional.

As for the clergy and commons, Fletcher does not see much possibility of either group challenging the authority of the tsar. In a long and in part very biased account of Russian religion and the Russian church, he depicts the clergy as too rich and too ignorant to participate seriously in public life. It devotes all its energies to the management of its great landed properties and the pursuit of trade, and prefers to suffer in silence occasional spoliation rather than to stand up to the monarchy and risk losing all it has (p. 42v). "The clergy of Russia," Fletcher says, "as well concerning their lands and revenues, as their authority and jurisdiction, are altogether ordered and over-ruled by the Emperor and his council, and have so much, and no more of both as their pleasure does permit them." (p. 83v) Fletcher's characterization of the Russian clergy as preoccupied with agricultural management and trade, ignorant, depraved, and ready to back the autocracy to the hilt as the price of preserving its wealth, conforms in general with the picture we obtain from contemporary Russian sources.

The merchants do not appear as a separate category in Fletcher's narrative; nor are they so treated in other sixteenth-century English accounts of Russia.[53] As may be gathered from Ivan's contemptuous reference to them in a letter to Elizabeth (cited above, pp. 11–12), they were then considered merely a low breed of commoners. The term *muzhiki torgovye*—"trading boors"—indicates that clearly enough. As far as the English were concerned, the only important traders in Russia were the tsar, who accumulated merchandise from tribute, and the monasteries.

The whole massive structure whose ultimate purpose is the exploitation of the country for the benefit of the monarch rests, in Fletcher's view, on the ignorance and depravity of the common people. His devastating description of Russian manners and morals has earned him a bad reputation among some Russians and in large measure accounts for the

troubles his book subsequently had with Imperial as well as Soviet censorship. He has been accused of being hostile to the Russians and giving an unfair picture of their intellectual and moral condition.[54]

The charge of antipathy toward Russians is not quite just. Certainly, Fletcher had his reasons to dislike the country. Yet it must be noted that his antipathy was invariably directed against the regime, and never against the people. He speaks of the Russians as a nation "of reasonable capacities," "of natural wit," and regrets their lack of opportunities "that some other nations have to train up their wits in good nurture [i.e., education] and learning" (p. 48 and 115v). He shows much symapthy for the "poor people . . . now so oppressed with intolerable servitude" and hopes they may some day be given a government "of some better temper and milder constitution" (p. 17). Fletcher nowhere states that the Russians have a tyrannical government because they are uncivilized, but, on the contrary, explicitly says that they are uncivilized because they have a tyrannical government. One of the principal premises and conclusions of his account is that tyranny breeds barbarism.

Furthermore, what Fletcher has to say about the general cultural level of the population finds ample confirmation in other contemporary accounts, native as well as foreign. One late nineteenth-century historian, drawing on a large body of sixteenth-century literature—much of it of Russian origin—drew a picture of Russian society of that time every bit as devastating as Fletcher's.[55] The picture which emerges from other English accounts is similar.[56] The consensus is so overwhelming—one may almost say, unanimous—that it cannot be ascribed simply to prejudice or misunderstanding.

The ordinary sixteenth-century Russian, as he emerges from the narrative of Fletcher and other contemporaries, is given to lying and cheating, idleness, and inveterate 'round-the-clock drinking. He is also addicted to a variety of "sins": "whoredoms, adulteries, and like uncleanness of life" (p. 116v). The distinction of Fletcher here, as in other parts of his narrative, is that he goes beyond mere condemnation to the causes. He raises the question why a people of "reasonable capacities" and "national wit" should sink into so barbarous a condition. He places the blame directly on the government, which he accuses of having an interest in keeping the people ignorant "that they may be fitter for the servile condition wherein now they are, and have neither reason nor valor to attempt innovation": for "a man of spirit and understanding, helped by learning and liberal education can hardly endure a tyrannical government" (pp. 48 and 85v). The monarchy, assisted by the nobility and clergy, enter, in Fletcher's view, into a deliberate conspiracy to maintain the population in ignorance and to prevent it from learning of life abroad.

This end is furthered by the policy of relentless fiscal exaction by the government and its agents, which breeds duplicity, indolence, and the habit of living at mere subsistence level:

> The great oppression over the poor commons makes them to have no courage in following their trades: for that the more they have the more danger they are in, not only of their goods but of their lives also. And if they have anything, they conceal it all they can . . . I have seen them sometimes when they have laid open their commodities for a liking [for approval] . . . to look still behind them and towards every door, as men in some fear that looked to be set upon and surprised by some enemy. Whereof asking the cause, I found it to be this, that they have doubted lest some nobleman or *syn boiarskii* of the Emperor had been in company, and so laid a train for them to pray upon their commodities perforce. This makes the people (though otherwise hardened to bear any toil) to give themselves much to idleness and drinking, as passing for no more than from hand to mouth. (pp. 46v–47v).

Fletcher calls attention to two additional features which reinforce the grip of the monarchy over the nation. First is the rigidity of the social system. He notes with great insight that it is virtually impossible for a Russian to change his social status, and ascribes this practice to political considerations: "This order that binds every man to keep his rank and several degree[s] wherein his forefathers lived before him is more meet to keep [the Emperor's] subjects in servile subjection . . . than to advance any virtue or to breed any rare or excellent quality in nobility or commons, as having no farther reward nor preferment whereunto they may bend their endeavors" (p. 49).

The second is lawlessness. Fletcher correctly states that Russia had no written laws "save only a small book" (p. 53)—meaning the Code of Ivan IV, issued in 1550—and rightly stresses the great importance of spoken or customary law. As an Englishman and a lawyer he was shocked by the submissiveness of judges, and the authority of the tsar and his council to give verdicts and to grant pardons (p. 21v).

The total picture of Russian society as it emerges from Fletcher's description is of an interlocking system of economic exploitation, the ultimate aim of which is, regardless of the consequences, to enrich the monarch. The words which Fletcher puts in the mouth of Ivan IV, whether true or apocryphal, describe Fletcher's own view of the matter as practiced in Russia: that the nation is like a beard or like a flock of sheep "that must needs be shorn once a year at the least to keep them from being overladen with their wool" (p. 14). The fleecing is done directly and indirectly: directly by an elaborate system of exactions, which Fletcher enumerates in detail (chapter 12), and indirectly by first

allowing the officials to rob the people, and then arresting these officials and confiscating their ill-gotten gains. The low level of culture combined with lawlessness which breeds social conflict assures the preservation of this despotic regime.

The whole system is so firmly consolidated in its political, social, and cultural elements that there is little possibility of Russia evolving toward that government of "better temper and milder constitution" which he hoped Russians would some day secure. In a passage which is one of the most remarkable in a book abounding in remarkable passages, Fletcher addresses himself to a question which has much vexed political thought in the twentieth century: whether an all-embracing absolutism is capable of peaceful evolution toward a more liberal system. His answer is negative. He says it would be "a hard matter to alter the state of the Russe government as it now stands," and justifies this view as follows (pp. 33v–34v):

> First, because they have none of the nobility able to make head. As for the lords of the four *chetverti* or *tetrarchies* they are men of no nobility, but diaks advanced by the Emperor, depending on his favor, and attending only about his own person. And for the dukes that are appointed to govern under them, they are but men of a titular dignity . . . of no power, authority, nor credit, save that which they have out of the office for the time they enjoy it. Which does purchase them no favor but rather hatred of the people, for as much as they see that they are set over them not so much for any care to do them right and justice as to keep them under in a miserable subjection, and to take the fleece from them not once in the year (as the owner from his sheep) but to pull and clip them all the year long. Besides the authority and rule which they bear is rent and divided into many small pieces, being divers of them in every great shire, limited besides with a very short time; which gives them no scope to make any strength nor to contrive such an enterprise if happily they intended any matter of innovation. As for the common people . . . besides their want of armor and practice of war (which they are kept from of purpose) they are robbed continually both of their hearts and money (besides other means), sometimes by pretence of some service to be done for the common defence, sometimes without any show at all of any necessity of Commonwealth or Prince. So that there is no means either for [the] nobility or people to attempt any innovation, so long as the military forces of the Emperor (which are the number 8000[0] at the least in continual pay) hold themselves fast and sure unto him and to the present state. Which needs they must do being of the quality of soldiers and enjoying withal that free liberty of wronging and spoiling of the commons at their pleasure which is permitted them of purpose, to make them have a liking of the present state. As for the agreement of the soldiers and commons, it is a thing not to be feared, being of so opposite

> and contrary practice much one to the other. This desperate state of things at home makes the people for the most part to wish for some foreign invasion which they suppose to be the only means to rid them of the heavy yoke of this tyrannous government.

The country, desolate and apathetic, "so full of grudge and mortal hatreds, . . . will not be quenched (as it seems now) til it burn [out] into a civil flame" (p. 26). The foreign invasion and the civil war which Fletcher expected came to Russia fifteen years later.

Of the Russe Commonwealth ran into difficulties from the moment of its appearance.

The Muscovy Company had had enough trouble with the Russian government to be acutely disturbed by a book written by an ambassador who had acted in Moscow on its behalf in which Russia and its country were described in the blackest colors. It feared in particular that the Russians would seize upon passages casting aspersions on Tsar Fedor and his protector Boris Godunov to cancel its surviving rights. As soon as the book was out, therefore, the company formally petitioned William Cecil to suppress it. In their petition the merchants nowhere accused Fletcher either of falsehoods or of inaccuracies, but merely of making statements offensive to the Russians. The request was granted, and the book was withdrawn from circulation.[57]

Of the Russe Commonwealth was reprinted in its entirety in 1643, at the height of the controversy between parliament and king and on the eve of the English civil war. At that time Fletcher's account acquired particular relevance as a protest against royal absolutism. This version was published again in 1657. Afterwards, the book fell into oblivion. Since all these integral versions became very rare, the public knew Fletcher's account mostly from expurgated versions which appeared in various compendia of travel accounts.[58]

Of the Russe Commonwealth came back into circulation early in the nineteenth century when it was discovered by Russian historians. Karamzin located a copy of the 1591 edition in the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and referred to it frequently in the ninth and tenth volumes of his *History*, published in the 1820's. In his opinion, Fletcher gave on the whole a just estimate of sixteenth-century Russia.[59] Karamzin's severe condemnation of Ivan IV, which earned him the disapproval of Russian reactionaries, was in no small measure due to Fletcher's evidence. Sergei Solov'ev, another great nineteenth-century historian, also relied heavily on Fletcher, as did every subsequent historian writing on the

sixteenth century. But much as it was used by specialists, the book itself remained inaccessible to the general public.

An attempt to remedy this situation was made in 1845 by a group of archivists working in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Archive of this ministry was in the first half of the nineteenth century an active center of intellectual and scholarly life, in part thanks to its unique collection of books and documents on Russian relations with the West. With the encouragement of the enlightened director of the Archive, Prince M. A. Obolenskii, the archivists undertook to translate into Russian some of the most important foreign accounts of Muscovite Russia, beginning with Herberstein's and Fletcher's. In so doing they took advantage of a regulation which exempted from censorship materials bearing on the period antedating the Romanov dynasty, that is, prior to 1613. Fletcher's book was translated by one D. I. Gippius, and edited by the legal historian N. V. Kalachov. The text was ready in 1847, at which time Obolenskii made arrangements with the Imperial Moscow Society of Russian History and Antiquities to have the translation as well as the full original English text come out in its quarterly Proceedings (*Chteniia*).[60] The Gippius-Kalachov translation appeared under Obolenskii's editorship in the twenty-third number of the Proceedings, issued in September 1848.

One can hardly conceive of a less oportune time for the publication of a book as critical of Russia as Fletcher's. Nicholas I, always a conservative, had been thrown into panic by the revolutionary wave which had swept Europe in the spring of 1848, and had adopted a policy of extreme reaction. The government now made a genuine effort to base its internal policy on the ambiguous triad which the Minister of Education, Count S. S. Uvarov, had casually formulated in 1832 in his annual report: Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality. One of the unwritten axioms of this doctrine was the sanctity of Russia's past. Only a year before, the censors had prohibited the publication of a Russian translation of Herberstein's *Commentaries,* an innocuous work compared to Fletcher's.[61]

It was apparently no coincidence that the very first recipient of the Proceedings containing Fletcher's work was Count Uvarov himself. Uvarov had been engaged in a personal feud with the chairman of the Imperial Moscow Society which sponsored the edition, at whose hands he had suffered the previous year a humiliating defeat in a bureaucratic squabble. Some well-wisher (rumor blamed the writer Shevyrev or the historian Pogodin) brought the issue to his attention, and the minister could now enjoy his revenge. Uvarov quickly perused the text, learned the names of the persons responsible for the publication, and within an hour notified Nicholas. The punishment was swift. The publication of the Proceedings was suspended, the chairman of the society was reprimanded by Nicholas

personally and forced to resign, and the wholly innocent secretary to the society was temporarily deprived of his professorship at Moscow and ordered to Kazan. Curiously, Obolenskii himself suffered no harmful consequences. All of the nearly one thousand copies of the Proceedings with the offending text which had been distributed to subscribers were recalled, except for four left in the possession of eminent and trusted persons. The impounded copies of the journal, as well as proofs of the English text scheduled for future publication, were placed under seal in storage. Efforts to lift the ban on Fletcher in the more enlightened reign of Nicholas's successor, Alexander II, were unavailing. But somehow the impounded copies disappeared, and when early in the present century a search was made for them in the storage where they had been placed in 1848, not a single one could be found.[62]

Of the Russe Commonwealth was republished in its integral form by the Hakluyt Society in 1856, under the editorship of E. A. Bond. The first legal Russian edition appeared in the midst of the Revolution of 1905.

NOTES

1. C. R. Beazley, ed., *The Texts and Versions of John de Plano Carpini and William de Rubruquis* (London, 1903), p. 205.

2. K. H. Ruffman, *Das Russlandbild im England Shakespeares* (Goettingen, 1952), p. 176.

3. V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Skazaniia inostrantsev o Moskovskom gosudarstve* (Moscow, 1918).

4. The handiest edition is that published by the Hakluyt Society, translated and edited by R. H. Major: S. von Herberstein, *Notes upon Russia,* 2 vols. (London, 1851–52).

5. A good account of foreign travel accounts is by V. Kordt, *Chuzhozemny podorozhny po skhydnyi Evropy do 1700 r.* (Kiev, 1926). The pioneering bibliography by F. Adelung, *Kritisch-literarische Uebersicht der Reisenden in Russland,* 2 vols. (St. Petersburg–Leipzig, 1846), though outdated, is still useful. There is no edition or bibliography of Russian reports on Europe and Europeans, but a selection of the so-called *stateinye spiski,* or formal reports of ambassadors, has been published under the title *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov XVI–XVII vv.* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1954).

6. Russian sailors had used the northern route before the arrival of Chancellor, but they did so sporadically and mainly for diplomatic purposes, rather than for regular trade. See Joseph von Hamel, *England and Russia* (London, 1854), pp. 50–54.

7. The best account of the Company is T. S. Willan's *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553–1603* (Manchester, 1956).

8. I. Liubimenko, *Les relations commerciales et politiques de l'Angleterre avec la Russie avant Pierre le Grand* (Paris, 1933), pp. 280–81.

9. Cited by Willan, *The Early History,* p. 58.

10. Cited by I. M. Kulisher, *Ocherk istorii russkoi torgovli* (Petrograd, 1923), p. 118.

11. It is interesting to note that the Turks were much admired in sixteenth-century English and particularly French literature for their sobriety, discipline, and effective government. See Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (New York, 1937), pp. 100–121, and C. D. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520–1660)* (Paris, [1938?]), pp. 376–406.

12. Cited in Herberstein, *Notes upon Russia,* Vol. I, p. clvi. A good analysis of the Elizabethan "image" of Russia is to be found in Ruffman's *Das Russlandbild.*

13. Iurii Tolstoi, *Pervye sorok let snoshenii mezhdu Rossiieiu i Anglieiu, 1553–1593* (St. Petersburg, 1875), pp. 109–110. The original English translation (pp. 114–115), omits the words "rule by yourself" in the first sentence, and renders "trading boors" as "boors and merchants." One cause of Ivan's fury was Elizabeth's failure to request reciprocal rights of asylum in Russia. In her reply she said she had "no manner of doubt of the continuance of our peacable government without danger either of our subjects or of any foreign enemies." Willan, *The Early History,* p. 99. Another, was her coolness to his marriage proposal.

14. Willan, *The Early History,* p. 119.

15. Jerome Horsey, "His Travels," in E. A. Bond, ed., *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century,* Hakluyt Society Publications, Vol. XX (London, 1856), p. 156.

16. Documents bearing on the Marsh affair can be found in *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva, XXXVII (1883),* pp. 186–245, *passim,* and Tolstoi, *Pervye sorok let,* pp. 292–340.

17. Fletcher's life is most fully recounted by Lloyd E. Berry in *The English Works of Giles Fletcher, the Elder* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1963), pp. 3–49.

18. *Athenae Cantabrigienses,* III (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 36–37; Berry, *The English Works of Giles Fletcher,* pp. 7–25.

19. The official Russian record of Fletcher's embassy is in *Vremennik Imperatorskogo Moskovskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnosti Rossiiskikh,* Vol. VIII (1850), Part II/2, pp. 1–96: "Stateinyi spisok Angliiskogo posla Elizara [*sic*] Fletchera byvshego v Moskve v 7097 godu."

20. See Fletcher's report in R. Pipes and J. Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), p. [45]. The Russian record supports his assertion that he was not welcomed ("Stateinyi spisok," p. 2).

21. See Pipes and Fine, eds., *loc. cit.,* pp. 19–19V and [44].

22. This episode, described by Fletcher in Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* p. [44]), is also noted in "Stateinyi spisok," p. 3.

23. See Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* pp. [51–52].

24. "Stateinyi spisok," pp. 41–75.

25. Thomas Fuller, *The Worthies of England,* edited by John Freeman (London, 1952), p. 279. Bond, citing this passage (*Russia,* p. cxxiii) wonders how a dead man could have sought amends for his own murder.

26. See Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* p. 2V.

27. Richard Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (London, 1589). In some copies Fletcher's account is on pp. 502–504, in others on pp. 498–500.

28. Berry, *The English Works of Giles Fletcher, the Elder,* pp. 383–384.

29. Two other manuscripts are known. One is at the Bodleian Library in Oxford (MS. Univ. E. 144), the other at the University of Minnesota Library. Lloyd Berry, who has studied all three, considers the Oxford and Minnesota manuscripts posterior to the Cambridge one. His collation indicates that they contain no significant information not found in the Cambridge manuscript.

30. S. M. Seredonin, *Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera 'Of the Russe Commonwealth' kak istoricheskii istochnik* (St. Petersburg, 1891), pp. 45–46.

31. *Georgii Pachymeris De Michaele et Andronico Paleologis Libri Tredecim* (cf. ed. Bonn, 1835).

32. Martin Kromer, *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri* XXX (Basileae, 1555).

33. Nicephorus Gregoras, *Romanae, hoc est Byzantinae historiae Libri XI,* probably in the Basel 1562 edition, which contains also L. Chalcocondylas' account, *De origine ac rebus Gestis Turcorum,* which Fletcher cites.

34. *Antoni Bonfinii Rerum Ungaricarum Decades Quatuor,* Basileae, 1568.

35. *Berosus Babilonicus,* Paris, 1510.

36. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* (cf. Holder edition, Strassburg, 1886).

37. Seredonin, *Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera,* p. 56.

38. Bond, *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century,* p. 256. Fletcher's indebtedness to Horsey is a matter of dispute among historians. Hamel (*England and Russia,* p. 225) and Seredonin (*Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera,* p. 67) support Horsey's claim. Others reject it on the grounds that Horsey, judged by his own account, lacked both the education and the understanding to do more for Fletcher than supplement the information Fletcher had obtained on his own (Bond, p. cxxii; Ruffman, *Das Russlandbild,* p. 54; Berry, p. 148). Horsey's account, in which he admits to being "but a plain grammarian," is reproduced in Bond, pp. 153–266.

39. Fletcher had at his disposal an English-Russian interpreter named John Sowter (Tolstoi, *Pervye sorok let,* p. 397; see also Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* 1591 ed., p. 89).

40. Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* pp. 16–16V.

41. *Ibid.,* pp. 21–21V, 27, 28 and 26.

42. Seredonin, who subjected Fletcher's book to a detailed analysis as an historical source, was himself a conservative and nationalist Russian and considered Fletcher prejudiced toward Russians and incapable of "understanding" them. Seredonin's treatment of Fletcher, therefore, must be accepted with some caution. He considers the most important parts those dealing with commodities (Chapter 3), the armed forces (Chapters 15–17), the borderlands (Chapters 18–20), and everyday life (Chapters 26 and 27). The sections dealing with politics and fiscal policies are in his opinion useful but full of errors, owing in part to what Seredonin considers Fletcher's regrettable tendency toward over-systematizing. Fletcher's geographic and historical descriptions, as well as his chapters on religion, he dismisses as useless.

43. A detail of Jenkinson's map is reproduced in Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* p. xii.

44. See, e.g., Ruffman, *Das Russlandbild,* 81–87.

45. A. L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (New York, 1961), Chapter II.

46. *De republica Anglorum* (London, 1583); see the edition by L. Alston (Cambridge, 1906).

47. *Ibid.,* p. xiii.

48. *Ibid.,* pp. 14–15.

49. M. Dewar, *Sir Thomas Smith; a Tudor intellectual in office* ([London], 1964), p. 112.

50. This is the title under which Smith's book appeared in 1589 and thereafter.

51. Seredonin points out (*Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera,* pp. 230–233), citing Kliuchevskii, that the institution which Fletcher calls "Zabore" (p. 22V) is not the so-called Zemskii Sobor, or Assembly of the Land, but the "Dumnyi Sobor," a joint meeting of the Boyar Duma and clergy.

52. In dealing with the *oprichnina* Fletcher says that "nobles" were enrolled in both the *oprichnina* and *zemshchina,* the criterion being loyalty to the tsar (p. 25V). This view contrasts with that dominant until recently in Russian historiography which held that the *oprichnina* had been established as an institution formed of the gentry to destroy the great nobility assigned to the *zemshchina.* It is interesting to note that most recent research confirms Fletcher's interpretation. Monographs by S. B. Veselovskii (*Issledovaniia po istorii oprichniny,* Moscow, 1963) and A. A. Zimin (*Oprichnina Ivana Groznogo,* Moscow, 1964) show that the *oprichnina* contained both nobles and gentry, and was directed not against the upper nobility as such but against all persons regarded as disloyal by Ivan IV. The prevailing earlier opinion rested in part on a misreading of Fletcher. Cf. Zimin, *Oprichnina,* p. 344.

53. Ruffman, *Das Russlandbild,* pp. 110–111.

54. The charge was first levied by Slavophile publicists, from whom Fletcher was defended by the Westerners. See the anonymous article (written by A. Pypin), "Dzhil's Fletcher," *Sovremennik,* No. 3 (1865), Part I, pp. 105–132.

55. I. Preobrazhenskii, *Nravstvennoe sostoiane russkogo obshchestva v XVI veke po sochineniiam Maksima Greka i sovremennym emu pamiatnikam* (Moscow, 1881). Russian sources, in conceding the low moral level of the population, often blamed it on foreign (i.e., western) influences. See Seredonin, *Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera,* pp. 160–162.

56. Ruffman, *Das Russlandbild,* pp. 135–144.

57. Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* pp. [61]–[64]. Evidence that the book was in fact suppressed can be found in Berry, *The English Works of Giles Fletcher,* p. 153.

58. See bibliography in Pipes and Fine, eds., *Of the Russe Commonwealth,* pp. [65]–[68].

59. N. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo,* vol. X, note 343.

60. S. A. Belokurov, "'Delo Fletchera,' 1848–1864 gg.," *Chteniia Imperatorskogo Moskovskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnosti Rossiiskikh,* vol. 3 (234), 1910, Section II, pp. 1–40; A. A. Titov, "Istoriia pervogo perevoda sochineniia Fletchera," in

O gosudarstve russkom—sochinenie Fletchera, 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1906), pp. vii–xiv.

61. V. S. Ikonnikov, *Opyt Russkoi istoriografii,* Vol. I, Pt. 2 (Kiev, 1892), p. 1430; Kliuchevskii, *Skazaniia inostrantsev,* p. 315.

62. Belokurov, "'Delo Fletchera,'" pp. 37–38.

CHAPTER 2

Karamzin's Conception of the Monarchy[1]

I desire neither a constitution nor representatives, but in my heart I remain a republican, and yet a loyal subject of the Russian tsar; here is a contradiction, but not in reality!

—Karamzin to Dmitriev (1818)

The natural inclination of the mind in studying history, viewing as it does all events *ex post facto* and aware as it is of their consequences, is to consider past occurrences as part of what followed rather than what preceded. This is due not only to our propensity to impose upon historical phenomena patterns of cause and effect derived from everyday experience, but also to the greater interest which most of us have in periods nearer and therefore more pertinent to our own time. This tendency, natural as it may be, often leads to misinterpretation of historical events. For it is quite obvious that people—the subject of historical investigations—are guided in their actions by ideas and experiences of their own and preceding times, and not by those which followed. The historian may thus be said in a sense to be handicapped by his own knowledge; and nothing is intellectually more difficult, as well as fascinating, for the historian than to subject himself to the laborious process of cleansing his mind of the knowledge of *post facto* occurrences, as he must in order to understand properly the events under investigation.

Karamzin is a case in point. In some ways, for reasons beyond his control, he became an unwitting victim of a dispute between nineteenth-century Russian conservatives and liberals, a dispute that took place under circumstances quite different from those which had prevailed when he formulated his political ideas. Consequently, he is often appraised in terms of nineteenth-century issues, a century to which he belonged

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physically (in part at least, since he lived from 1766 to 1826), but in which he never felt intellectually at home. The notion of "autocracy" (*samoderzhavie*), which lies at the heart of his entire political philosophy, cannot be justly interpreted in terms of events and disputes which emerged after his death, when the conflict over the Russian constitution was well on its way. By then the conditions, issues, and even the very terminology of the debate had changed beyond recognition.

1

Karamzin's political thought is meaningful only when viewed from the vantage point of the preceding century. This entails the use of eighteenth-century terminology, a conception of the state and sovereignty quite different from the one to which the succeeding century has accustomed us, and above all, a feeling for the opinion of Europe in the lifetime of Karamzin. For the Western world was then in the first throes of a revolution whose long-range import was hidden from the eyes of contemporaries, and the coming nineteenth century—to us an age of irretrievable serenity—threatened to turn into a graveyard of civilization.

To begin with, Karamzin, unlike his intellectual successors, was not a political man. He was born and raised in a society that considered the business of politics unsuitable for a gentleman and best left to the sons of burghers and clergymen, known as *"liudi krapivnogo semeni"* ("pettifoggers"). In his time politics had not yet acquired the almost religious significance which it was to have for succeeding generations, parting friend from friend and dividing society into hostile camps. Though keenly interested in the politics of his time, being a witness of the French Revolution and the great changes which followed it, he always regarded politics as an avocation, second to literature, and far less important than aesthetic pursuits or the delights of friendship. His principal concern was with cultural problems. He was Russia's first professional man of letters, and even his *History*, which kept him busy during the second half of his life, was strongly permeated with a belletristic and dramatic spirit. Concern for culture—culture in general and that of Russia in particular—constitutes also the background of his interest in politics.

To understand why this was so one must consider Karamzin's early development. From the very beginning of his literary career, Karamzin had associated himself with circles and movements which, though broadly connected with the Enlightenment, were hostile to its extreme rationalist manifestations, and had sought a compromise in the eighteenth-century conflicts between faith and reason, tradition and progress. Both the

Freemasonic circle of Novikov, for which Karamzin worked as a writer and translator from 1784 to 1789, and the Sentimentalist movement in Russian literature, which he headed after his disassociation from the Freemasons, stressed the moral and emotional sides of human nature, rejecting the extreme anti-traditionalism and rationalism of French encyclopedic thought then dominant at the court in St. Petersburg. Both movements took a pessimistic view of man's condition, both saw progress as feasible only in terms of the inner self-perfection of man, both emphatically rejected legislative manipulation as a technique for attaining human happiness. Karamzin very early in his life arrived at the conclusion that progress is primarily a cultural phenomenon, in which political and social factors are of secondary importance. A better society can be brought about solely

> by the imperceptible action of time, through the slow but certain, safe progress of the human mind, enlightenment, education, and good manners. When men shall be persuaded that virtue is indispensable to their own happiness, then shall the golden age have arrived, and man shall enjoy the peaceful blessings of life under *every* form of government.[2]

This view of progress, which Karamzin upheld to the end of his life, determined to a large extent his attitude toward politics. Progress, which was to be internal, individual, and moral, could not be accomplished through the positive action of governments; rather, it called for a government which left its citizens the widest possible scope for the exercise of civil liberties and at the same time provided them with the maximum of external and internal security. A pessimistic appraisal of man's condition coupled with confidence in the ability of men—given freedom and security—gradually to improve themselves, lies at the base of Karamzin's whole political outlook.

The writings of Karamzin are crowded with paeans in favor of "liberty"; it is the source of all wealth and power, a "golden thing," the loss of which, next to physical suffering, is one of life's two genuine tragedies.[3] Freedom Karamzin understood largely in the sense of the "rule of law": "Freedom exists where there are laws, where the good man lives without fear; where they are absent, slavery prevails."[4] Growing older, Karamzin tended in increasing measure to conceive freedom as something inner, spiritual, as "freedom which comes not from the Sovereign, not from a Parliament, but which every one of us secures for himself with God's help. Freedom [which] we must attain in our hearts through a peaceful conscience and trust in Providence"[5]—much in the manner in which a Gogol or Tolstoy was later to understand it. But, this evolution notwithstanding, Karamzin continued throughout his life to place great

emphasis on the establishment of civil liberties on a firm foundation of law.[6] It was this ingredient in his political thought which was so unpalatable to some reactionaries of his time and gave him the reputation of a dangerous "Jacobin."[7]

The establishment of civil liberty depended, in turn, upon firm government. Like Hobbes, Karamzin considered law without the sword a worthless parchment: "Law without authority is nothing."[8] Only a government which is strong, respected, even feared can keep in check the natural predatory instincts of man, and forcefulness is the necessary (if not sufficient) quality of every sound government. Nothing can excuse weakness: "In politics weakness is guilt."[9]

The belief in the interdependence of civil liberty and political power is a central tenet of Karamzin's political theory, and the search for a political system able to reconcile them constitutes the principal purpose of his political inquiries. The existence of such an interdependence seemed to him to be demonstrated by the entire course of Russian history. Whenever Russian governments were weak and incapable of resisting internal or external pressures, the rule of law weakened, and in the ensuing anarchy the desire of men to save their lives and possessions induced them to barter their liberties for security. The ancient Russians lost their republican liberties and institutions like the *veche* as a consequence of the weakness of the Kievan state. This weakness had led first to internal disintegration and then to foreign conquest. The princes of Moscow who undertook to free the Russian nation from the Tatar lords experienced no difficulty in depriving their subjects, eager to be saved from foreign domination, of their civil liberties. "Political slavery [of a state] is incompatible with civil liberty,"[10] and civil liberty cannot survive where internal struggles for power sap the strength of the state. Firm authority is therefore the first and foremost criterion of good government: it alone creates the conditions in which other political virtues can flourish.

Such are the premises from which Karamzin approached the problems of government. His analysis was carried out with the help of concepts developed by French thinkers of the eighteenth century, especially Montesquieu, and, to a lesser extent, the Physiocrats. Indeed, with a certain shift of emphasis from economics to civil liberties, the question which Karamzin sought to resolve was not unlike that confronting the Physiocrats, who desired virtually complete freedom of economic forces under a government sufficiently strong and "disinterested" to resist the pressures of divergent social groups endeavoring to use the supreme political authority for their own purposes.[11] Such considerations were valid, of course, only in states, such as old-regime France or old-regime Russia, which possessed legally recognized estates.

2

In the eighteenth century, at least until Montesquieu, political systems were customarily divided in accordance with the Aristotelian triad into republics, aristocracies, and monarchies. The distinguishing feature of each system was the number of persons in whom the right of sovereignty was legally vested: in republics it was the property of all, in aristocracies of few, in monarchies of one. Though the occurrence of so-called "mixed" governments was recognized, the tendency of political thought of this period was to operate rather in terms of such archetypes. This tendency was further strengthened by Montesquieu's reform of the current political terminology. In his search for the most practical political system, Karamzin followed closely Montesquieu's categories and historical approach, adapting both to Russian conditions.

In politics Karamzin was a thoroughgoing pragmatist. The value of all institutions, in his opinion, was relative, and the ultimate test of every government was its ability to rule effectively, not its conformance to this or that political philosophy:

> For forms of government let fools contest
> Whate'er is best administered is best. (Pope)

Certainly any system, even the worst, is preferable to anarchy. "Every civil society, confirmed by centuries, is for good citizens a sanctuary, and in the most imperfect one must admire a certain wonderful harmony, order, and arrangement."[12] Karamzin was fond of quoting Solon to the effect that while his laws were not perfect, they were the best which could be devised for the Athenians.[13] Although he always admired English institutions (like many of his Russian contemporaries, he was an ardent Anglophile), he never thought it prudent to transplant English institutions to other countries. English liberties, he observed in the 1790's after his return from London, were not so much a product of the activity of Parliament and other British institutions as of the high degree of public enlightenment; this was the true "Palladium" of English liberty. To copy British laws was unwise: "What is good in England will be bad in another country."[14] It is more important for institutions and laws to conform to the traditions and character of the people to whom they are meant to apply than to abstract formulae of justice or perfectibility devised by philosophers. Karamzin, like conservatives in other countries at this time, fully accepted Montesquieu's historical, relativist approach to politics and denied the validity of metaphysical considerations in politics. All his political views had a bearing on concrete

situations: his advice was meant to apply only to Russia, and to Russia on the level of cultural development at which he knew it.

Karamzin also accepted Montesquieu's conception of the political *principe*, that is, the specific "human passion which sets [the political system] into motion";[15] and with it the conviction that the decline of great states usually begins with the corruption of their *principe*. The *principe* of the two types of what Montesquieu called "republican" governments—democracy and aristocracy—is "virtue," which in the former entails "love of country" and "equality," in the latter "moderation."[16]

Using these categories, Karamzin unhesitatingly disposed of these two types of government as inappropriate for Russia. The main shortcoming of republics was their *principe*, that is, virtue. Karamzin's pessimistic view of human nature, especially his consistent rejection of the idea of equality, precluded the acceptance of a political system erected on such a foundation. If, nevertheless, he persisted to the end of his life in reiterating his "republicanism," it was because, like many other eighteenth-century thinkers, he used this term to mean not so much a concrete system of government (since, aside from the American republic, whose experience was hardly applicable to Europe, and the short-lived and quite unstable French Republic, there were then no large republics in existence) as an ideal, an order attainable only in the remote future when men became truly perfect. Being "a republican" involved belief in the worth of virtue, justice, progress—objects which, in Karamzin's view, could be attained least of all by the republican system. "My heart, no less then the hearts of others," Karamzin wrote in 1802, "burns at the virtue of great republicans, but how durable were its brilliant epochs?"[17] In this sense Catherine II, too, had considered herself a "republican."[18]

Karamzin likewise rejected the aristocratic order. To understand how it was possible for a defender of the rights of the upper classes like Karamzin to be hostile to the political ambitions of his own class—a phenomenon contrary to much of Western experience—one must bear in mind that the Russian nobility consisted of two basic groups: the old aristocracy, descended from the princes and boyars, and the gentry. Though since the time of Peter I no legal distinction had been made between these two groups, their traditions and aspirations were by no means identical. The true aristocracy, with ancient, inherited titles, had waged throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bitter fights with the monarchy to assert its rights and compel the crown to hear and respect its advice. These conflicts ended with an undisputed victory of the monarchy, assisted by the petty military gentry. The gentry were the creation of the crown, which had endowed them with certain legal

and economic benefits (notably landed estates with bonded peasants); they were dependent on the crown and loyal to it. The last effort of the old aristocracy to circumscribe the power of the crown and to introduce an aristocratic system of government on a Swedish model, made in 1730, was suppressed by the monarchy at the request and with the active help of the gentry. In Karamzin's time the ambitions of the aristocratic groups were no more than a faint memory, and certainly a *Fronde* was quite out of the question. Yet in condemning on principle all those Russians who in the past had wanted to impose limitations on the crown, Karamzin acted as a true representative of his own class, the gentry. To him Kurbskii was a "traitor," and so were the boyars who in the reign of Ivan IV and during the Time of Troubles had tried to weaken monarchical power.[19] He similarly condemned the nobility's efforts to impose "conditions" at the accession of Anne.[20] All these endeavors of the "many-headed hydra of aristocracy," as he called it, had been inspired by selfish motives and inevitably led to internecine conflicts. Aristocracy, judged by past experience, is incapable of providing firm authority. To be efficacious political authority must not be divided: "Two political powers in one state are like two dreadful lions in one cage, ready to tear each other apart."[21] The tragic history of Poland provided ample proof of that.

Democracy and aristocracy are thus rejected because they are unable to satisfy one of the two prerequisites of good government, forcefulness: the former because its *principe* rests upon an unrealistic appraisal of human nature; the latter because it entails a division of authority and, therefore, civil strife. Firm government can be assured only by a system which concentrates sovereignty in the hands of a single person, that is, by a monarchy. Karamzin is thus an out-and-out monarchist; but when we attempt to ascertain more precisely what Karamzin means by the term "monarchy," we run at once into semantic difficulties.

Karamzin favored in Russia a type of government called *"samoderzhavie."* While this Russian term is a literal translation of the Greek word *"autokrateia"* and thus may be correctly rendered as "autocracy," its English equivalent has implications which may be misleading. As Ključevskij has pointed out, the term *samoderzhavie,* which was first used in Russia by Ivan III, originally meant the *independence* of the grand princes of Moscow, their freedom from all external control, in particular from that of the Tatar khans.[22] Later on, beginning with Ivan IV, this concept was broadened to include the notion of the *limitlessness* of the tsar's power; that is, a term originally coined for external application, to define Russia's relations with foreign powers, was now extended to the relationship between the tsar and his subjects. While in the succeeding centuries the definition of the Russian monarchy theoretically included

both these ingredients, in practice the situation was by no means clear, and at times the monarchy's independence (external as well as internal) was more heavily stressed than its limitlessness, its freedom of action more than its scope.[23] This emphasis was due to purely practical considerations: what was challenged in the monarchy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries was not so much the extent of its authority (which was in any case limited by the size of the country, the relative inadequacy of the administrative apparatus, and other natural factors) as its monopoly of authority. In effect, therefore, the concept of *samoderžavie* and its derivatives came to mean exactly what the concept "sovereignty" meant in the West, and, as one writer justly observed, the history of both these concepts in Russia was in many respects identical.[24]

Now according to the political nomenclature current in the eighteenth century, the monarchic system of government was one in which sovereignty was vested in a single person. In the words of Montesquieu, "In monarchies the prince is the source of all power, political and civil."[25] For this reason in the eighteenth century, up to and including the time of Karamzin, in Russian political literature as well as legal documents, the French terms *"monarchie," "monarchique," "souverain,"* and so forth, were rendered as *"samoderzhavie"* or *"samoderzhavstvo,"* and *"samoderzhavnyi."* Feofan Prokopovich in his *Pravda voli monarshej* (1722), the main absolutist tract of the reign of Peter I, used the terms *"samoderzhavie"* and *"monarkhiia"* interchangeably, as when he wrote that the political system "in which . . . all authority is vested in the hands of a single person . . . is called monarchy (*monarkhiia*), that is, autocracy (*samoderzhavstvo*)."[26] Catherine II, in the French version of her *Instruction*, written forty years later, translated the terms *"samoderzhavie"* and *"samoderzhavnyi"* as *"souverain"* and *"monarchique"* rather than *"autocratique."*[27] This usage must still have been prevalent as late as the 1820's, for the Dictionary of the Russian Academy of Sciences, published at that time, defined the adjective *"samoderzhavnyi"* as *"samovlastnyi,* comprising legislative functions," and the noun *"samoderzhets"* as "the sovereign, supreme authority, ruling *samovlastno* without depending on anyone."[28]

An analysis of Karamzin's use of the term *samoderzhavie* reveals that he understood it in this sense, that is, as a system of which full sovereignty is vested in one person. He concluded the analysis of early Russian history which opens his *Note on Ancient and Modern Russia* with the statement that "Russia had been ruined by division of authority, and was delivered by a wise *samoderzhavie*"—the contrast between "division of authority" and *"samoderzhavie"* implying that he considered the indivisibility of supreme power, i.e., of sovereignty, the distinguishing

feature of the latter. Elsewhere in the same work he remarked that following the accession of the Romanov dynasty in 1613, when true autocracy was established in Russia, "no one beside the monarch could judge or bestow; all authority was an effusion of the monarch's." And further, "In Russia the sovereign is living law. . . . In the Russian monarch are united all powers: our government is fatherly, patriarchal."[29]

Thus it seems clear that Karamzin used the term "*samoderzhavie*" in much the same sense in which contemporary Western thinkers used the term "sovereignty," and *samoderzhets* meant to him the "sovereign" or "monarch." What he had in mind was not so much *unlimited* authority—for, as we shall see, he wanted it limited in several ways—as *undivided* authority. He certainly did not wish this concept to imply the right of the monarch to rule at all, without regard for the wishes of his subjects or the law of the realm. This is evident from the clear-cut distinction that Karamzin, again following Montesquieu, drew between the two subspecies of royal government.

One of the many contributions which Montesquieu made to European political thought was to expand the traditional Aristotelian types of political systems from three to four. This he did by first dividing them into two main categories: those which entrust sovereignty to the many and those which entrust it only to one, and then further dividing each of these categories into two subgroups: on the one hand, democracies and aristocracies, and on the other monarchies and despotisms. The distinction between democracies and aristocracies lay in the extent to which sovereign power was fragmented: in democracies it was the property of all, in aristocracies of the few; the distinction between monarchies and despotisms was not in the number of those who possessed sovereignty, but in the manner in which sovereignty was exercised. According to Montesquieu's nomenclature, the power of monarchs and despots was the same, that is, both had exclusive possession of sovereignty; but in every other respect the two systems differed. The monarchical system is one in which "a single person governs by fundamental laws," "by fixed and established laws" with the assistance and through the agency of various intermediary and dependent orders, the most important of which is the nobility ("no monarchy, no nobility; no nobility, no monarchy"), and a repository of laws. In despotisms, on the other hand, the only law is the whim of the ruler; the subjects, including the "well-born," lack rights; and the prince rules the whole country directly, that is, dispenses with the services of the intermediate orders. The *principe* of monarchy is "honor," that of despotism "fear." A monarchy turns into a despotism when the ruler "wants to govern everything by himself," when he changes more in the constitution of the state than is necessary,

when he deprives "some of his subjects of their hereditary employments to bestow them arbitrarily upon others."[30]

This distinction is vital for an understanding of Karamzin's concept of monarchy. His desire to have the Russian crown endowed with all the attributes of sovereignty did not in the least mean that he wanted it to acquire the prerogatives of limitless power in the sense in which they are claimed by the modern totalitarian state. Political authority which recognized no law was to him a tyranny or despotism and not a monarchy, since the very definition of monarchy entailed the concept of government by law. Indeed, the principal difference between monarchies and despotisms in this interpretation lay in their contrary attitudes to law. In Karamzin's works, therefore, a sharp distinction was always drawn between *samoderzhavie* and despotism (*despotiia*) or tyranny (*tiraniia*). While both these systems were firm and forceful, and as such to Karamzin always preferable to unstable, ineffective republics, only one of them, true monarchy, or *samoderzhavie,* could provide what Karamzin required of all good government, namely, a compound of liberty and force.

The fatal defect of despotism is that it produces an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty in the country and in this way undermines the very foundations of culture. On this ground Karamzin condemned despotism, whether in France as during the Revolution and under Napoleon, or in Russia. Russia, in Karamzin's analysis, had had in her history only two despots: Ivan IV (in the second part of his reign) and Paul I. His unprecedented censure of these two tsars, and especially the frank criticism of Ivan IV in the ninth volume of the *History* (the criticism of Paul was contained in the *Note* and was not published in Russia until the very end of the nineteenth century, although it was known from widely circulated manuscript copies) were to cause Karamzin much trouble with reactionary groups at the court and in the bureaucracy who were ready enough to regard him with suspicion for his praises of civil freedoms and his defense of Novikov.[31]

By adhering to this distinction and differentiating Russian monarchs who ruled without regard to law from those who respected it, Karamzin made it quite clear that he considered *samoderzhavie* not so much rule without limits as rule without controls; a system which allowed the subjects no political rights, but did leave them the full measure of civil rights. He evolved this conception in the first decade of the nineteenth century in reaction to the designs of Alexander I and his advisors to provide Russia with a written constitution and representative institutions, which, if carried out, would have inevitably impinged upon the authority of the tsar and divested him of a share of sovereign power.

3

Karamzin based his advocacy of such a system of absolute monarchy largely on pragmatic arguments. First of all, its *principe,* "honor," seemed to him best suited to the natural impulses of man: love of distinction, ambition, vanity. If Voltaire had criticized Montesquieu for allegedly wishing to found monarchy upon "vices," Karamzin found Montesquieu's formulation acceptable precisely for that reason:

> A republic cannot survive without a high degree of national virtue. This is the reason why monarchical government is far happier and more promising: it does not demand of citizens extraordinary things, and may progress while on a level of moral development at which republics collapse.[32]

Furthermore, *samoderzhavie* was well adapted to Russia's geographic and historical conditions. Like many of his contemporaries Karamzin believed in a correlation between the size of a state and its system of government: the larger the country, the more concentrated should be its political power. An excessively rapid change in the dimensions of the state was thought to react inevitably on its political institutions. The belief that Russia as the largest European power needed an exceptionally centralized system of government was virtually axiomatic in Russian public opinion of the time. "Il n'y avoit qu'une Puissance ainsi concentrée dans la seule personne du Souverain ["*samoderzhets*" in the Russian version] capable de produire un degré d'impulsion proportionné à l'étendue d'un aussi vaste Empire," Catherine II wrote at the beginning of her *Instruction.*[33] With this Karamzin agreed: Russia is "comprised of so many and so diverse parts, every one of which has its special civic interests. What save unlimited monarchy can produce in this machine unity of action?"[34] With a certain degree of consistency Karamzin cautioned against further expansion of the Russian state, mindful of the warnings of Montesquieu that overextended monarchies turn into despotisms or aristocracies, and in some instances—the prime example being ancient Rome—disintegrate altogether.[35] He approved therefore neither of the third partition of Poland nor of the acquisition of Finland, though he had no objection to Russian expansion in the Black Sea area.[36]

The soundness of this argument, if it required additional proof, could be conclusively shown by the entire course of Russian history. In Karamzin's interpretation Russia's whole historical experience taught that whenever the power of the sovereign was emasculated, Russia fell apart and her subjects turned into slaves; only absolute monarchy was capable of restoring her independence and greatness. The survival of civil rights

in Russia was, historically speaking, entirely dependent upon the preservation of strong, centralized authority. As a consequence of her historic evolution, autocracy had in fact become "an indispensable property of Russia, her only political constitution, the sole basis of her unity, strength, welfare."[37] It "has established and resuscitated Russia: with the change of her political system she has perished and must perish. . . ."[38] In so arguing Karamzin was not evolving a new interpretation of Russian history, but merely enlarging upon a view widely accepted by Russian historians in the eighteenth century. Tatishchev, Müller, Schlözer, Shcherbatov, and Boltin—all the pioneers of Russian historiography—agreed that Russia's traditional system of government, the one best adapted to her conditions and national character, was a system in which all political power was concentrated in the hands of the monarch.[39] The inspiration that moved Karamzin to write his audacious *Note on Ancient and Modern Russia* and the reason for the extreme urgency of its tone ("I perceive danger but as yet no perdition") was the conviction that the constitutional and administrative designs of Alexander I and his advisors would alter a system of government which he and his historiographic predecessors had come to regard as traditional for Russia and thus bring about the country's destruction.

Having little regard for legalistic or philosophical considerations in politics, Karamzin rested his case for absolutist government in Russia largely on such practical arguments: in the final analysis, what mattered to him was that the system work, not that it be "right," "just," or "lawful." Yet at least on one occasion he argued that insofar as Russia had a constitutional, legal commitment to a specific political system, that commitment was to autocracy. In 1613, when the nation had elected the Romanov dynasty, it gave the new tsar and his successors the right to rule autocratically:

> The distresses of the rebellious aristocracy [of the Time of Troubles] had enlightened the citizens as well as the aristocrats; both, with one voice and spirit, proclaimed Michael an autocrat, an unlimited monarch; both, fired by love of the fatherland, exclaimed only: *God and the King*! . . . They inscribed a charter and laid it at the throne. This document, inspired by the wisdom of experience, approved by the will of both the boyars and the people, is the holiest of all state charters. The princes of Moscow had instituted autocracy—the fatherland conferred it on the Romanovs.[40]

The charter to which Karamzin refers has not survived, and modern scholars doubt whether it had ever existed at all.[41] For the purpose of the present inquiry, however, the question of its existence is irrelevant.

In Karamzin's time it was widely believed that at the accession of the Romanovs the deputies to the Land Assembly had prepared a state charter legally establishing the dynasty and entrusting it with autocratic power. Schlözer, the German historian of Russia active in the second half of the eighteenth century, also considered it the juridical foundation of Russia's statehood, her "constitution."[42] This charter made it possible for Karamzin to strengthen his case for absolute monarchy: he could assert that it not only was most suitable for Russia geographically, historically, and otherwise, but also was constitutionally binding. If the subjects had the sacred duty to obey their sovereign, then the tsar, in turn, was obligated to preserve *samoderzhavie* and resist all attempts to restrict his power; he might rule badly, but rule he must. "You may do everything," Karamzin admonished Alexander I, "except legally limit your authority."[43] The only legal limitation of sovereignty was its duty to admit of no legal limitations.

Sovereignty must be intact, concentrated in the hands of the monarch; legislative, executive, and judicial powers must be combined. But this is not to say that the proper exercise of the royal prerogative entails no circumscriptions, since—according to definition—only despotism is truly unlimited in its use of power. The true monarchy is confined in several ways, by moral and historical considerations, as well as by its obligation to respect laws of its own making.

> [The] unlimited authority of the [Russian] monarchs impressed foreigners as *tyranny*; in their ill-considered judgment they forgot that *tyranny* is merely abuse of autocracy, which occurs in republics as well, when powerful citizens or dignitaries oppress society. Autocracy means not the absence of laws: for where there is *obligation* there also is *law*; at no time and no place did anyone ever doubt the obligation of the monarch to attend to the happiness of the nation.[44]

> The Sovereign, no less than the subjects, must fulfill his sacred obligation, the violation of which destroys the ancient covenant of authority with obedience and precipitates the nation from the level of civic development into the chaos of private natural law.[45]

Public happiness and welfare are best promoted through the maintenance of peace and order, that is, by safeguarding the subjects from external and internal enemies. Karamzin views the function of the state very much as did the Physiocrats, to whom it entailed principally the preservation of *liberté, propriété,* and *surêté.*[46] His emphasis on firm government must not mislead us into believing that he wanted an all-powerful state. On the contrary, he wanted sovereignty unified not in order to enlarge its scope but in order to keep it out of the hands of

"selfish" groups; his position in this respect was at least as consistent as that of the Physiocrats, who, in seeking the political system most likely to ensure economic freedom, settled on what they called *despotisme légal*. Karamzin, too, desired a state which would not be too active, or, at any rate, no more so than the requirements of security dictated. He consequently rejected Enlightened Absolutism. Although he sympathized wholeheartedly with its aims, he considered it an illegitimate use of royal authority. He preferred Henry IV to Louis XIV, Frederick William I to Frederick the Great—kindly, passive, frugal kings to dynamic reformers.[47] Joseph II appeared to him an "unfortunate victim" of an excessive reformatory zeal.[48] Of Russian monarchs he probably liked best Alexis Mikhailovich, the second Romanov, whose reign was later in the nineteenth century much idealized by the Slavophiles. Peter I, Russia's great transformer, on the other hand, Karamzin censured for his unwarranted interference in the lives of his subjects:

> Manners should change naturally . . . to proscribe statutes for them is an act of violence which is illegal also for an autocratic monarch. The people in its original covenant with the kings had told them: "Guard our safety abroad and at home, punish criminals, sacrifice a part to save the whole"—but it had not said: "Fight against the harmless inclinations and tastes of our domestic life." In this sphere the Sovereign may in justice act only by example and not by decree.[49]

The function of the monarchy is thus conceived in essentially negative terms. It has the moral obligation to limit the sphere of its action, confining it to matters which may truly be said to come within the purview of *raison d'état*.

A second restrictive factor is the monarchy's obligation to rule by law. Karamzin does not make use of natural-law arguments, since he considers positive law to take precedence over natural law. But the monarch's authority to issue laws does not exempt him from the obligation of obeying them: he cannot, without good cause, change legislation and revoke rights which he has once promulgated. The importance of law and freedom within law as preconditions of progress in Karamzin's thought has been indicated above; to him power without law was as odious as law without power was impotent.

One of the most important laws binding the Russian crown was the estate legislation of Catherine II. Technically speaking, until 1785 Russian subjects had no civil rights, and from the legal point of view all Russians, regardless of origin or status, were entirely at the tsar's mercy. The control which a strong monarch like Peter I exercised over the nobility was every bit as great as that which the nobles exercised over their

serfs; in fact, one Russian historian goes so far as to consider the Russian nobility in the first half of the eighteenth century "in bondage" to the crown.[50] Of course, between theory and practice there was a gulf vast enough to make all the difference, especially during the reigns of Peter's successors. But while the nobility gained *de facto* rights and shed its duties, its privileged position became first normalized in legal terms only in the reign of Catherine II with the charter known as the *Zhalovannaia gramota dvorianstvu* of 1785. This charter not only confirmed all the privileges acquired by the upper class in the course of the century, but also gave it a body of rights which stipulated that no nobleman would be deprived of his honor, life, property, or title without a trial by his peers, that noblemen were free to travel abroad, to dispose of their property and to hold assemblies, that they were exempt from corporal punishment, and so forth. In effect it made the nobility the first social group in Russia to be endowed with civil rights on a Western model.

To Karamzin this charter constituted the cornerstone of Russian civil freedom; it not only accorded with Russia's monarchic government, but was essential to it. In his words, Catherine "transformed slaves of the tsar into human beings" and thus helped cleanse the Russian monarchy of elements of despotism.[51]

Somewhat inconsistently, Karamzin regarded these rights as legally binding upon the very monarchy which he had elsewhere stated was empowered to do anything except legally limit its own authority. Violations of the nobles' rights, such as those perpetrated by Paul I, corrupt the *principe* of the monarchic system and transform it into a tyranny. "The rights of the well-born," Karamzin wrote in connection with Alexander's attempted reforms, "are not a branch of monarchial authority, but its principal, indispensable instrument."[52] Karamzin felt so strongly on this subject that in 1819 he interceded personally with Alexander I on behalf of a gentlewoman who, without a trial, had been sentenced by the Senate to penal servitude for a fiscal irregularity. Such action was a clear violation of the Charter of 1785, which, among other things, had guaranteed that no nobleman would be sentenced at all except by trial, and to forced labor only by imperial decree. "Does the Senate, in order to safeguard the interest of the treasury, have the right to destroy the Charter of the Nobility, the law of the realm?" he inquired of a friend in this connection.[53] His concern for the destiny of the monarchic system, which he considered indissolubly bound up with the noble estate, and for the rule of law, inspired also Karamzin's criticism of the administrative-bureaucratic reforms of Speranskii. He wanted the process, begun by Catherine, of granting the Russian estates legal (if unequal) rights of a nonpolitical character to be continued by her successors, and he evidently wished Russia to receive something in the nature of her own Bill of

Rights: "Protect with the sacredness of the law," he urged Alexander, "the inviolability of the Church, the Sovereign, the officials, and the personal security of all Russians; consolidate the civil bond among us, and then attend to the inalienability of property, to inheritance, purchase, testaments, mortgages, and so forth."[54]

Although in matters of religion Karamzin never progressed beyond a tepid deism (even in his Masonic days he had been much more attracted by Novikov's cultural activities than by his mysticism), he wanted the clergy and the Church to enjoy a secure position within the state structure, and he questioned Peter's use of the Church establishment for political ends. The Church must not be subordinate to the monarchy, for this causes it to lose its moral force, and prevents it from fulfilling its main function, which is to serve as the public conscience: "Spiritual authority must have a separate sphere of action, outside secular authority, but act in close coöperation with it."[55] Its rights, too, must be respected.

Russia must also possess what Karamzin, following Montesquieu, called a "repository of laws" (*khranilishche zakonov*), represented by the Senate and Synod.[56] They serve as the legal "memory" of the country and help keep the monarchy within the bounds of law. The importance which Karamzin attached to law induced him to call repeatedly for its codification. In fact, the methods of codifying Russian law which he had outlined in his *Note* were remarkably similar to the ones which Speranskii was actually to use in the reign of Nicholas I.[57]

Finally, the autocratic monarch is confined by historical tradition. He must not undertake anything which may upset the state's constitution, nor must he issue decrees for which the subjects are unprepared. In general, he should endeavor to steer the ship of state along its traditional course, changing it, if at all, only by the smallest of degrees, and always eschewing novelty because "all novelty in the political order is an evil to which recourse is to be had only of necessity: for time alone gives laws their proper firmness, since we respect more that which we respect for a long time, and we do everything better from habit."[58]

4

An analysis of Karamzin's writings reveals that his conception of the monarchy was in all essentials identical to that evolved by Montesquieu in his *Spirit of Laws* and was widely accepted by Russian public opinion in the reign of Catherine II. Like Montesquieu, Karamzin regarded the monarchic system as one characterized by its consignment of indivisible sovereignty to one person, by rule of fixed laws, by execution of administrative functions with the assistance of "intermediate, subordinate,

and dependent" orders, the most important of which is the nobility, and by possession of repositories of law. Like Montesquieu, too, Karamzin differentiated this system in its structure and in its spirit from despotism, which signifies arbitrary rule, contempt for law and for the civil rights of subjects, and failure to make use of the "intermediate orders."

Where Karamzin did depart from Montesquieu was in his views of the political measures best calculated to preserve civil liberties. For whereas the Frenchman, in the celebrated eleventh book of his *Spirit of Laws*, argued that individual liberty could be assured most successfully in a monarchy where the executive, legislative, and judicial aspects of sovereignty were distributed, Karamzin was equally convinced that, in Russia at any rate, the very opposite principle held true. There, the preservation of civil liberty depended on strong government, and strong government could be obtained only if the monarchy held all the legitimate political powers firmly in its own hands. If this view should seem incongruous today, we must not forget two vital differences between Karamzin's time and our own. First of all, when Karamzin spoke of the state, he had in mind not the modern egalitarian, democratic state, where political and civil rights are to a large extent interdependent, but one where the body politic was made up of a number of well-defined, corporate estates, which by their very existence confined political authority to a relatively narrow field of action. If, in point of fact, Russian reality never came close to this ideal of a corporate class state, in the time of Karamzin it was still reasonable to believe that by an extension of the policies of Catherine II such a state could actually be established. All of Karamzin's political proposals were based on the assumption that this would be the case and that consequently there would be created a balance of power between the crown and the estates, each independent within its sphere of competence and confined to it. In the second place, the time in which he lived was one of great social and political unrest. The memory of the Pugachev Rebellion, which had raged near his native region when Karamzin was a child; the disorder and terror of Revolutionary France, as well as the incessant bloodshed of the Napoleonic era; the disintegration of the great Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—all these events seemed to indicate the paramount need for political stability and firmness.

The glaring weakness of Karamzin's solution lay, of course, in his failure to indicate *how* political authority could be made to stay within its proper limits without being subjected to some form of external control. This was the problem to which Speranskii was to address himself and try to solve with his complex project of constitutional reforms. Karamzin, when faced with it, could do no more than voice the belief that public opinion generally made it difficult for a tyrant to follow a good monarch,

and to seek consolation in the thought that despots were altogether rare—Russia, in her whole long history, having had only two.[59]

Was he unaware of this weakness? It is difficult to say. He seems to have felt that, politically speaking, Russia had a choice of two alternatives, neither quite satisfactory, each a gamble: monarchy or democracy. With his view of life and human nature, he preferred to take a chance on excessive power, legally unlimited though exercised with the utmost circumspection. It was better to run the risk of the monarchy turning occasionally into "despotism" than to deprive the crown of a share of sovereignty and thus, by weakening its force, risk anarchy and all the evils which flow in its wake. In his time the principal threat to freedom seemed to come not from too strong but from too weak government.

NOTES

1. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the Russian Research Center of Harvard University, whose generous assistance made this, as well as many of my other studies, possible.

2. N. M. Karamzin, *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika* (letter dated "April 1790," but probably written several years later), in *Russkaia proza XVIII veka* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), II, 446; emphasis added.

3. *Vestnik Evropy*, No. 7 (1802), p. 262; "Marfa Posadnitsa," *Vestnik Evropy*, No. 1 (1803), p. 25; "Razgovor o schast'i," in *Sochineniia Karamzina* (St. Petersburg, 1848), III, 494–495.

4. [N. M. Karamzin], *Sochineniia Karamzina* (Petrograd, 1917), I, 271.

5. "Mysli ob istinnoi svobode," in *Neizdannye sochineniia i perepiska Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Karamzina* (St. Petersburg, 1862), Part I, p. 195.

6. It may be remarked here that for the purpose of this essay no difference will be made between the political ideas of the young and the mature Karamzin. Such differences exist, but they do not affect the essential features of his political philosophy and can be greatly exaggerated. On this subject the reader is referred to an illuminating essay by Wolfgang Mitter, "Die Entwicklung der politischen Anschauungen Karamzins," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, Band 2 (Berlin, 1955), pp. 165–285, especially p. 279.

7. In 1810 Golenishchev-Kutuzov, a mediocre poet connected with Shishkov and his linguistic school, sent the police a denunciation against Karamzin, in which he repeated the current charge of "Jacobinism": 'Take his *Marfa Posadnitsa*. What a republican spirit! . . . He made a drunken and stupid hag deliver speeches in favor of the liberties of the Novgorodians and orate like Demosthenes." A. M. Skabichevskii, *Ocherki istorii russkoi tsenzury* (St. Petersburg, 1892), pp. 161–162. Grand Duke Constantine likewise considered Karamzin a Jacobin and expressed amazement that the censorship had permitted his *History* to appear in print. *Russkaia Starina*, LXXIX, 202–203.

8. N. M. Karamzin, *Zapiska o drevnei i novoi Rossii*, ed. V. Sipovskii (St. Petersburg, 1914), p. 47; henceforth referred to as *Zapiska*.

9. *Sochineniia* (1848), I. 531.

10. *Zapiska,* p. 9.

11. On the general subject of the influence of Montesquieu in Russia, cf. A. Pypin, "Ekaterina II i Montesk'ë," *Vestnik Evropy,* CCXXI (May 1903), 272–300; and a most superficial article by F. A. Kogan-Bernshtein, "Vliianie idei Montesk'ë v Rossii v XVIII veke," *Voprosy Istorii,* No. 5 (1955), pp. 99–110; the entire subject of Montesquieu's impact on Russian politics and thought in the second half of the eighteenth century still awaits adequate treatment. On the Physiocrats in Russia, see V. Sviatlovskii, *Istoriia ekonomicheskikh idei v Rossii,* Vol. I (Petrograd, 1923).

12. *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika,* p. 446.

13. *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika,* p. 568; *Zapiska,* p. 40.

14. *Sochineniia* (1848), II, 778–779.

15. Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws,* Book III, Section 1.

16. Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws,* Book V, Sections 3 and 8.

17. "Istoricheskoe pokhval'noe slovo Imperatritse Ekaterine II," *Sochineniia* (1848), I, 312.

18. In her epitaph Catherine II had, among other things, this to say of herself: "She was good-natured and easy-going; she had a cheerful temperament, republican sentiments, and a kind heart." *Memoirs of Catherine the Great,* K. Anthony, trans. (New York, 1935), p. 326.

19. *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo,* Vol. IX, ch. 2; "O moskovskom miatezhe v tsarstvovanie Alekseia Mikhailovicha," *Sochineniia* (1848), I, 418.

20. *Zapiska,* p. 32.

21. *Zapiska,* p. 47.

22. V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Boiarskaia duma drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1883), pp. 258–260.

23. The confusion prevailing in Russian legal terminology concerning this term is reflected in Russia's Fundamental Laws. Article No. 1 of the Fundamental Laws of 1892 read *"Imperator Rossiiskii est' monarkh samoderzhavnyi i neogranichennyi."* In the Fundamental Laws of 1906, in which the constitutional powers of the tsar were clearly curtailed, Article 4 read: *"Imperatoru Vserossiiskomu prinadlezhit verkhovnaia samoderzhavnaia vlast'."* The omission of the word *"neogranichennyi"* (unlimited) and the retention of the term *"samoderzhavnyi"* in 1906 seems to indicate that (1) the two were not synonymous, and (2) the concept of *samoderzhavie* did not necessarily entail the concept of unlimited authority. Cf. N. M. Korkunov, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo* (St. Petersburg, 1909), I, 210–215, and N. I. Lazarevskii, *Lektsii po russkomu gosudarstvennomu pravu* (St. Petersburg, 1908), I, 123–129, for a discussion of this problem. It may be noted that three centuries before these events Tsar Shuiskii, a limited monarch like Nicholas II after 1906, was also called *"samoderzhets"* in official state documents.

24. G. Gurvich, *"Pravda voli monarshei" Feofana Prokopovicha i ee zapadnoevropeiskie istochniki* (Iur'ev, 1915), p. 46.

25. *Spirit of Laws,* Book II, Section 4.

26. Gurvich, p. 47.

27. N. D. Chechulin, ed., *Nakaz Imperatritsy Ekateriny II*, in Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, *Pamiatniki russkogo zakonodatel'stva, 1649–1832*, No. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1907), Articles No. 9, 10, 13, and so forth.

28. Imperatorskaia Rossiiskaia Akademiia, *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*, VI (St. Petersburg, 1822), 18–19. By contrast, a twentieth-century Russian dictionary defines the term *samoderzhavie* as "a system of government with *unlimited* authority of the monarch," and *samoderzhavnyi* as "possessing full authority, disposing of *unlimited* authority and power" (emphasis added). D. N. Ushakov, ed., *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka* (Moscow, 1940), IV, 32–33.

29. *Zapiska*, pp. 10, 12, 122.

30. *Spirit of Laws*, Book VIII, Section 6.

31. Of Ivan IV Karamzin wrote in 1815 to A. I. Turgenev, "In comparison with Ivan [IV], Caligula and Nero were mere children." *Russkaia Starina*, No. 2 (1899), p. 468. Karamzin is the only person known to have publicly defended Novikov at the time of the latter's arrest in 1792. He did so in a poem entitled "K milosti" ("To mercy"), in which, in language of great boldness, considering the panic which had seized Russian society after the first arrests, he urged Catherine to safeguard the freedoms of her subjects. *Sochineniia Karamzina* (1917), I, 61–63.

32. *Sochineniia* (1848), I, 543.

33. *Nakaz*, Article No. 9.

34. *Zapiska*, p. 47.

35. Cf. Montesquieu's *Considerations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*; Roger B. Oake, "Montesquieu's Analysis of Roman History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (January 1955), pp. 44–59.

36. *Pis'ma N. M. Karamzina k I. I. Dmitrievu* (St. Petersburg, 1866), pp. 50, 031 (letter dated September 6, 1794); later Karamzin did approve of the partitions of Poland as returning Russia her rightful patrimony; on Finland (*Zapiska*, p. 56), Karamzin wrote: "We conquered Finland; let the *Moniteur* praise this acquisition! We know what it had cost us in addition to men and money. A state requires for its security not only physical but also moral might; sacrificing honor, justice, we impair the latter. We seized Finland, having thereby earned the hatred of the Swedes and the reproach of all nations—and I do not know what was more damaging to Alexander's magnanimity: to have been defeated by the French, or to have been compelled to imitate their predatory system."

37. *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo*, Vol. VII, ch. 4.

38. *Zapiska*, p. 47.

39. N. L. Rubinshtein, *Russkaia istoriografiia* ([Moscow], 1941), *passim*.

40. *Zapiska*, pp. 19–20.

41. S. Platonov, "Moskovskoe pravitel'stvo pri pervykh Romanovykh," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia* (December 1906), pp. 298–351; M. A. D'iakonov, in his *Ocherki obshchestvennogo i goudarstvennogo stroia drevnei Rusi* (St. Petersburg, 1910), pp. 449–453, on the other hand, subscribes to another theory, popularized in the eighteenth century by such foreign writers on Russia as Fokkerodt and Strahlenberg, that Michael might have been a *limited* monarch. It is quite clear from the context in which Karamzin refers to the "charter" that

he has in mind something quite different, namely, a document making the Romanovs absolute.

42. A. L. Schlözer, *Historische Untersuchung über Russlands Reichsgrundgesetze* (Gotha, 1777), pp. 11–12.

43. *Zapiska,* p. 48.

44. *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo,* Vol. VII, ch. 4.

45. *Zapiska,* p. 42.

46. Benedikt Güntzberg, *Die Gesellschafts- und Staatslehre der Physiokraten* (Leipzig, 1907), p. 75.

47. N. Karamzin, *Travels from Moscow* (London, 1803), I, 62–63 (in the Soviet edition, the passage praising the virtues of Frederick William I at the expense of Frederick the Great is omitted).

48. *Sochineniia,* I, 370–371.

49. *Zapiska,* p. 25; cf. Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws,* Book XIX, Section 14: When "manners and customs are to be changed, it ought not to be done by laws; this would have too much the air of tyranny: it would be better to change them by introducing other manners and other customs."

50. A. Romanovich-Slavatinskii, *Dvorianstvo v Rossii* (Kiev, 1912), p. xvii.

51. *Sochineniia* (1848), I, 336–346, 451; *Zapiska,* p. 37.

52. *Zapiska,* p. 126. Pushkin had similar ideas on this subject: "The hereditariness of the gentry is a guarantee of their independence. The opposite [i.e., the violation of the hereditary rights of the gentry] is an indispensable instrument of tyranny, or, more precisely, of a dishonorable and depraving despotism." A. Pushkin, quoted in S. L. Frank, *Pushkin kak politicheskii myslitel'* (Belgrade, 1937), pp. 36–37.

53. *Pis'ma N. M. Karamzina k I. I. Dmitrievu,* p. 262; *Neizdannye sochineniia,* pp. 230–235.

54. *Zapiska,* p. 112. The words "and then attend to" are meant as oblique criticism of Speranskii's Civil Code Project of 1810, which began with questions of property, inheritance, etc., before settling what Karamzin considered the more fundamental issues of civil rights.

55. *Zapiska,* p. 30.

56. *Zapiska,* p. 131.

57. *Zapiska,* pp. 103–114; cf. N. V. Kalachov, "O znachenii Karamzina v istorii russkogo zakonodatel'stva," *Besedy v obshchestve liubitelei rossiiskoi slovestnosti pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom Universitete,* Vypusk 1 (Moscow, 1867), Prilozhenie 1, pp. 1–23. The need of a code of laws for Russia was the subject of Karamzin's last private talk with Alexander I in August 1825; at this meeting Karamzin secured Alexander's pledge to provide the country with "fundamental laws"; *Neizdannye sochineniia,* p. 12.

58. *Zapiska,* pp. 58–59.

59. The problem of the relationship between autocracy and rule by law agitated Russian jurists until the very Revolution of 1905. An interesting discussion of this question can be found in Korkunov's *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo,* I, 215–222. Korkunov, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, drew a distinction between what he called "subjective" and "objective" right: the former, developed

in the West, entailed *rights* of subjects, and hence a limitation of sovereignty; the latter, prevailing in Russia, was the product of sovereign will, and had as its purpose the maintenance of *order*. "In our political system," wrote Korkunov, "legality is not a limitation imposed on authority from without, but its own creation" (p. 219). This distinction was due to Russia's historical and geographic condition. Korkunov, too, however, failed to indicate effective guarantees which would assure that the government operated within law, and he dismissed a current eighteenth-century Russian notion of restricting the autocratic government to the legislative sphere alone as impracticable. This is in many respects the fundamental problem of Russian politics.

CHAPTER 3

Catherine II and the Jews: The Origins of the Pale of Settlement

To a layman like myself, Jewish historiography seems to suffer from a higher degree of ethnocentricity than most. Jewish historians traverse the two millennia of the diaspora carrying barometers which they frequently consult to determine the atmospheric pressure: are times good for the Jews or are they bad? They rarely bother to enquire into the Gentile environment within which Jewish history develops. As a result, they fail to take into account that Gentile society normally concentrates on its own affairs so that the treatment which it metes out to the Jews in its midst, whether favourable or unfavourable, is a byproduct of concerns that have little if anything to do with the Jews themselves. This unwillingness to perceive Gentile society on its own terms strikes me as a major shortcoming of the Jewish psyche. It accounts not only for a great deal of superficial historiography, but, alas, also for much of the tragedy that has befallen Jews.

A historian of Russia who takes the trouble to look into the standard accounts of Russian Jewry—Dubnow's,[1] Greenberg's,[2] or Baron's[3]—is immediately struck that each of these authorities treats Jewish history as self-contained, *i.e.* by and large outside the context of Russian laws and institutions. They deal with policies which happened to affect the entire population of the the Empire as if they were intended exclusively for Jews, and at the same time minimize or pass over in silence policies which—if not in themselves then in the general context of Russia at that time—were sometimes very generous towards Jews. Even Iulii Gessen,[4] far and away the best authority on the subject, is guilty of such practices: for although he knew and well understood the implications of Russian policies toward the Jews, like his colleagues he preferred to

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interpret them in the "good-for Jews, bad-for Jews" tradition. Paradoxically, in order to obtain a rounded picture of the subject it is sometimes necessary to seek the assistance of overtly antisemitic authors: for they, zealous to show that Jews had brought all their misfortunes on themselves, go out of their way to emphasize what Jewish historians ignore.[5]

The purpose of this paper is to reassemble and at the same time reinterpret the principal facts bearing on the Jewish policies of Catherine the Great in whose reign Russian encountered for the first time a Jewish "problem" in the shape of over half a million Jews acquired in the partitions of Poland. It hopes to show that by standards of the time, Russian policies were remarkably enlightened and that in some respects Russia indeed pioneered the emancipation of Jews.

* * *

Catherine ascended the throne at the end of June, 1762, after a coup which removed her husband, Peter III. Despite the ease with which the coup had been engineered, her position was very insecure, especially at first. Catherine was both an usurper and a foreigner, and as such always ran the risk of being displaced in favour of someone else, such as her son, Paul. She was therefore especially prone to curry favour with groups on whose friendship the Russian crown had traditionally relied: the nobility and the church.

Historians make much of Catherine's personal feelings towards Jews, although, given the political constraints under which she had to operate, it is doubtful whether these played a decisive role. Her attitudes reflected the ambivalence typical of the Enlightenment under whose influence she had grown up. She viewed Jews as a superstitious race, held in the grip of an obscurantist religion, rather unscrupulous and perhaps greedier than most. Some of the philosophers whom she admired (such as Voltaire and d'Alembert) were vicious antisemites and their example in some measure influenced her. Yet, at the same time, Catherine had a profound distaste for the traditional church-sponsored antisemitism, which was largely responsible for the disabilities under which European Jews were then living and which, in turn, accounted for the flaws in their national character, as she perceived them. She also had a healthy respect for Jewish commercial abilities and wished to avail herself of them. In sum, she did not much care for Jews as they were but believed that given the right opportunities they could be made into useful members of society. She wanted to use the unlimited powers vested in the Russian crown to provide Jews with these opportunities; and though she was largely thwarted, she would have had every right to claim the honor of being the first sovereign in Europe to extend to the Jews equality with her Christian subjects.

Initially, her principal obstacle was the Orthodox church, traditionally the most antisemitic of all the branches of Christianity. In the 1760s the Orthodox establishment in Russia no longer represented much of a political force, having lost its most zealous following as a result of the Schism and having come under bureaucratic control of the state. Even so, Catherine could not easily dispense with its backing, because the church exercised influence over a populace instinctively suspicious of a foreign-born woman on the throne of the tsars. Peter III, Catherine's husband, had been openly scornful of Orthodoxy. He ignored its rituals, ordered all ikons save those of Christ and Mary removed from churches, told priests to get rid of their beards, and even contemplated building a Protestant chapel on palace grounds. Worst of all, early in 1762 he had all monastic and church lands confiscated on behalf of the state. Aware of the turmoil which these actions had produced among the masses, Catherine decided to turn them to her own account. She assumed the air of a devout Christian, praying while her husband caroused and making on every occasion a great display of piety. How much importance she attached to clerical support may be gauged from the Manifesto which announced her assumption of the crown: here defence of Orthodoxy was listed at the head of the reasons justifying the *coup d'état*.[6]

Given the hostility of the church toward the Jews, Catherine had every reason to wish not to have to confront this issue until she had a more secure grip on power. But as bad luck would have it, the matter came up for discussion in her first week as sovereign. The brutal expulsion of Jews from the Russian Empire, carried out in 1742–43 on the orders of Empress Elizabeth, had caused unhappiness among many people besides its victims. The western provinces had grown accustomed to the presence of Jewish businessmen. The port city of Riga, for example, complained that after the expulsion of Jews it began to lose trade to other Baltic cities, while the Ukrainian Elders asked to have Jews allowed to travel into Little Russia for business purposes.[7] Elizabeth had firmly rejected appeals of this kind, on one occasion declaring she had no desire "to profit from the enemies of Christ." Immediately after her death in 1761, new petitions calling for a revocation of the 1742 edict began to reach the Senate. Peter was overthrown before he could act on them. The question came up in the Senate at the beginning of July 1762, at one of the first sessions which Catherine attended in her capacity as sovereign. This is how (speaking of herself in the third person), Catherine describes what happened:

> Insofar as in the Senate all matters (save for the most urgent ones) are taken up in accord with an agenda, it was by mischance that at this meeting the project to allow Jews to enter Russia happened to stand at

> the head of the list. . . . Inhibited by circumstances from giving approval to this proposal, unanimously recognized as useful [by the Senators], Catherine was extricated from her predicament by the Senator, Prince [I. V.] Odoevskii, who rose and said: "Would it not please Her Majesty, before making up Her mind, to see what Empress Elizabeth had written in her own hand on the margin of a similar proposal?" Catherine had the records brought to her and found that Elizabeth, inspired by devotion, had written on the margin: "I do not desire any profit from the enemies of Jesus Christ." Less than eight days had elapsed since Catherine had ascended the throne; she had been raised to it to defend the Orthodox faith. She confronted a devout nation and a clergy which had not yet been given back its properties and which stood in need of the most elementary things as a result of this ill-conceived move. As always after such great events, spirits were in great turmoil; to make a debut with a project of this nature was not the way to calm them; to declare it harmful was impossible. Catherine simply turned to the Procurator General who, having counted the votes, approached her to learn of her decision, and said: "I wish this matter to be deferred to another time." And thus so often it is not enough to be enlightened, to have the best of intentions and the power to carry them out. Yet how frequently bold judgements are pronounced on the subject of wise conduct. . . .[8]

The question whether or not Jews were to be allowed into Russia, so casually postponed, was not taken up again in Catherine's reign. For lack of any instruction to the contrary, Elizabeth's exclusion edict of 1742 remained in force. On October 14, 1762, directing the Senate to draft an invitation to all foreigners who might wish to settle in Russia, Catherine asked that Jews be excluded from its provisions.[9] This order was promulgated in the oft-cited decree of December 4, 1762 (*Full Collection of Laws* or PSZ, No. 11,720). Curiously, however, the phrase "except for Jews" (*krome zhidov*), which appears in the title of this edict, does not recur in the text.

Catherine had made her obeisance to the church; but she was not to be prevented by the church from initiating such measures concerning Jews which she thought of immediate benefit to her country. During the next two years she carried out surreptitiously policies which clearly violated the spirit and letter of her own ordinances and opened the Empire's doors, ever so slightly, to a few Jews.

One of Catherine's perpetual concerns was to populate the territories located along the northern shores of the Black Sea which Elizabeth had taken from the Turks in the 1730s but left unattended. This area, named "New Russia," was at the time quite deserted. Since Catherine had grandiose visions of establishing Russia as a dominant Black Sea power, colonizing this area became for her something of an obsession. There

exists strong evidence that to further this goal, she entered in 1763 or 1764 into a conspiracy with Jewish entrepreneurs whom she commissioned to lure Polish and other European Jews into New Russia, in return for informal pledges of entry into Riga.[10]

The earliest document bearing on this affair is a secret message dispatched by Catherine in May 1764 to the Riga Governor General, instructing him to permit certain Jews to settle in his city and from there even to proceed to St. Petersburg, without questioning them about their religion.[11] Two months later in a personal note to Prince Dashkov, an officer in charge of armies on the Polish-Lithuanian border, Catherine wrote:

> Polish and other Jews (*zhidy*) who shall appear before him and state that they wish to go to New Russia to settle there are to be taken under his protection and issued passports to the Russian frontier [cities] of Riga and Smolensk.[12]

As a result of these arrangements, executed in utmost secrecy and uncovered by historians much later, Jews began in small numbers to re-enter Russia. New Russia did not hold much attraction for them, but Riga most definitely did, and a number of them remained there instead of proceeding south. By 1780 there were enough Jews in Riga to open a synagogue, even though all of its members were on "temporary" permits and forbidden from enrolling in the city's merchant registers. Their presence in this area was legalized only in 1785 by a decree (PSZ, No. 16,146) which allowed them to join the ranks of the merchant class at Shlok, a city twenty-six miles from Riga. In New Russia, Jewish presence was first formally acknowledged on November 16, 1769 (PSZ, No. 13,383) in an edict concerning prisoners of diverse nationalities captured by the Russian armies in Wallachia. The decree stated that those prisoners were to be given leave to settle anywhere in the Empire, again with the exception of the Jews among them; the latter were to be confined to New Russia. At this time three or four Jews were permitted quietly to establish themselves in St. Petersburg, at the residence of Catherine's confessor. In an exchange with Diderot (1773), Catherine said of them: "ils sont tolérés malgré la loi; on fait semblant d'ignorer qu'ils y sont."[13]

* * *

The first partition of Poland, in 1772, made it impossible to continue this kind of *laissez-faire* Jewish policy. In the Belorussian lands taken from Poland, almost one-tenth of the population—by best estimates, some 100,000 inhabitants—were Jews. Most of them lived in villages

and small towns where they occupied themselves keeping shop, peddling, in artisanship and a variety of trades connected with alcoholic beverages, the rights to which they leased from the local gentry. Their general situation at the end of the eighteenth century was extremely difficult, for Polish Jews had traditionally relied on the protection of the crown, and as the Polish crown declined they were left to the mercies of the local nobility, clergy, and petty bourgeoisie. Even so, they managed to preserve extensive administrative, judiciary, and fiscal self-government institutionalized in the *kahal*.

On entering Belorussia, the Russian authorities issued a proclamation, called "Plakat" (dated August 16 1772; PSZ, No. 13,850), which promised the population a very liberal regime. Their religion was to be inviolate, and all groups, without exception, were to retain whatever rights, freedoms, and privileges they had had under Polish rule: "from this day onward, every estate . . . of the incorporated territories shall enjoy throughout the entire expanse of the Russian Empire the advantages appropriate to it." To put at ease the Jewish population, which in view of Russia's previous Jewish policies had every reason to expect the worst, the *Plakat* devoted to them a separate section. Here it was stated that the Jews of Belorussia would be accorded their traditional communal rights as well as title to their properties. Gessen scornfully dismisses the *Plakat* as "having given little to Belorussian Jewry,"[14] but it is impossible to agree with this judgment. The *Plakat* in effect admitted Belorussian Jews into Russian citizenship, which it was not at all certain that it would do: Dubnow is no doubt closer to the mark when he says that under the same circumstances Elizabeth would have expelled all the Jews from Belorussia.[15] Secondly, by recognizing their religious rights, self-government, and title to property it assured Jews of something that they have been deprived of before and since in many countries. As if to emphasize that in the eyes of the Imperial government Jews constituted an ordinary religious minority rather than a special nation-caste, the *Plakat* referred to them not as *zhidy* but as *evrei, i.e.* Hebrews. This usage subsequently became standardized in official pronouncements, with the effect that *zhidy* in Russian acquired an offensive connotation. One could have read in the *Plakat's* statements about the "entire expanse of the Russian Empire" a promise that Jews, like the other inhabitants of Belorussia, would enjoy their estate rights in any region of the realm; but this was not explicitly asserted and probably not intended, being best explained by the careless editing characteristic of Russian decrees of that time.

The first Viceroy appointed to administer Belorussia was Field Marshal, Count Zakhar Chernyshev, a cosmopolitan gentleman who applied himself conscientiously to the improvement of the area.[16] The region was divided

into two provinces (*gubernii*), Mogilev (later renamed Vitebsk) and Polotsk. To ensure a smooth transition from Polish to Russian rule, Chernyshev advised St. Petersburg to retain Polish administrative practices in regard to the Jews. This advice was followed in the first ordinance concerning the administration of Belorussia, issued on September 13, 1772 (PSZ, No. 13,865). Like the rest of the tax-paying population of the Empire, the Jews were now attached to communal organizations—in their case, the *kahals*—which were to assume collective responsibility for the community's payment of tax obligations. The soul tax for Jews was set at 1 ruble, half-way between what Russian peasants and Russian merchants were paying at that time (70 kopecks and 1 ruble 20 kopecks, respectively).[17] The *kahal* was also entrusted with authority over the movement of the Jewish population by being given the right to issue passports for internal travel. The September 13 ordinance carried one other provision bearing indirectly on Jews to which not much attention was paid at the time but which in the long run was to cause them a great deal of trouble: the retail sale of alcoholic beverages in the towns of Belorussia was to pass into the hands of the city magistrates.

Surveying the situation of Jews in the first decade of Catherine's reign, one must conclude that despite the formal adherence of the Empress to the anti-Jewish sentiments of her predecessors, notably Elizabeth, the whole drift of her policies was friendly to Jews. The Russian monarchy gave evidence that it was more interested in profits than in religion, and regarded Jews without the customary Russian fanaticism. At this juncture the Jews of Belorussia had every reason to congratulate themselves on having passed from the anarchy of a disintegrating Poland under the firm and enlightened rule of Catherine.

* * *

Catherine had never been pleased with the condition of the Russian provinces. She thought the provincial administration overly centralized in St. Petersburg and insufficiently responsive to local needs. She also was appalled by the state of the cities: far too few in number, lacking in a true bourgeoisie, and generally misgoverned. But it took the peasant uprising under Emelian Pugachev (1773–4) to have her do something about this situation. The ease with which the rebels took over the southeastern regions because of the inability of the thinly scattered garrison troops to offer resistance convinced her that she could no longer delay a thoroughgoing reform of the provincial administration. Between 1775 and 1785 she introduced a series of fundamental reforms, which profoundly, and, on the whole, adversely, affected the condition of Russian Jewry.

An early step toward provincial reform was the edict of March 17, 1775 (PSZ, No. 14,275) which divided the entire trading and manufacturing population into estates and which later legislation formed into "municipal communities" (*gorodskiie obshchestva*). Members disposing of capital in excess of 500 rubles were enrolled in the ranks of merchants (*kuptsy*) of one of three guilds: to belong to the first guild one had to possess capital worth at least 10,000 rubles, to the second, between 1,000 and 10,000 rubles, and to the third between 500 and 1,000. All three guilds carried exemptions from the payment of the soul tax and the collective responsibility for other taxpayers in their community. Merchants paid annually a tax of one percent on their declared capital. Traders and artisans unable to meet the 500 ruble standard, were classified as townsmen (*meshchane*) and continued to pay the soul tax. Movement up and down the social ladder—between townsmen and merchants of the first guild—was free of any formalities and depended solely on the size of one's capital. Both estates enjoyed the right to pursue trade and manufacture, but this right was rendered fairly meaningless under Catherine in view of the fact that she gradually extended it to landlords and peasants as well.

In the latter part of 1775, Catherine began to reform municipal institutions. To decentralize the local apparatus, she separated from the general organs of administration institutions whose primary function was to be the dispensation of justice to merchants and townsmen. These were called municipal magistrates (*gorodovye magistraty*) in localities which were officially designated as cities (*goroda*), and *ratushi* in other urban settlements. They were comprised of a mayor (*burgomaster*) and from two to four councillors (*ratmany*), all elected by their constituents. Later on, these institutions were given additional responsibilities, including collection of taxes from merchants and townsmen. In the traditional Russian manner, these officials, although elected, were considered members of the imperial bureaucracy.

In connection with provincial reforms, the question arose what to do with the Jews of Belorussia. Two options were open: 1. to leave them as they were, attached to the *kahals* and rendering the soul tax; and 2. to regard them as ordinary subjects whose rights and tax responsibilities would be set according to their personal occupational and financial status. In the former event they would be treated as a nation-caste, as had been the case under Polish rule, in the latter as a religious minority. Each solution had its advantages. Under the first, things went on as before and no innovations were required likely to cause trouble with the Christian majority of Belorussia. Under the second, Jews would receive an opportunity to emancipate themselves from the control of their "fanatical" religious leaders and gradually to merge with society

at large. With little hesitation, Catherine settled on the second alternative: she decreed at the onset of the provincial reforms that Jews were to be administratively treated on equal terms with Christians, *i.e.*, given all the rights to which their occupation and capital entitled them. (On October 17, 1776 (PSZ, No. 14,522), an exception was made for Jews who converted to Orthodoxy: they were to be exempt from the soul tax and could choose any vocation or place of residence they wished.)

The Jews, too, faced problems in connection with these reforms. On the one hand, most of them were eager to preserve the traditional authority of the *kahal* which enabled them better to live in accord with Jewish law, and in some measure shielded them from landlords and officials. On the other hand, they did not want to miss out on the benefits granted urban inhabitants under the new legislation: exemption from the soul tax and responsibility for the tax arrears of their community; access to elective municipal offices; exemption from recruit obligations (for merchants); and the prospect of being allowed to move into the cities of inner Russia. The issue was further complicated by the feud between rabbinical and *hassidic* parties which divided Jewish communities at the time; harassed by the *kahal* administration, the *hassids* were not averse to seeing the power of the *kahals* reduced.

In late 1778 or early 1779, Jewish communities petitioned to have their members admitted to the ranks of the merchant estate then in the process of formation in Belorussia. Catherine promptly gave her assent. In an instruction sent to Count Chernyshev on January 7, 1780 (PSZ, No. 14,962) she ordered that qualified Jews in his area be allowed to join the ranks of the merchant estate and to meet their tax obligations in accord with the terms of the law of 17 March 1775. No mention was made in this instruction of Jews joining merchant guilds outside of Belorussia.

The advantages of acquiring the title of a *kupets* must have outweighed the disadvantages, for after Catherine had rendered her decision Jews in large numbers enrolled in the ranks of the merchant guilds: in Mogilev province 10 per cent of all the Jews, in Polotsk province, 6½ per cent.[18] The remainder of the Jewish population was a few years later automatically inscribed in the ranks of townsmen, apparently without a special decree being issued to this effect. Thus in the casual manner characteristic of Russian legislative practice, Jews were put into a social mould in which they were to remain encased until 1917: the Jewish nation became fully absorbed into the middle estate, with all Jews, including the majority who resided in the villages, being attached to the cities.

These developments had an immediate effect on the institutions of Jewish self-government. Every Belorussian Jews who inscribed himself in the merchant class—and that was one head of household in thirteen—

slipped out from the fiscal and judiciary authority of the *kahal*. Henceforth he paid his taxes to and was judged by the urban magistrate or *ratusha*, just as were his Christian neighbours. The townsmen continued to pay the soul tax to the *kahal*, but in other respects, including the judiciary, they, too, came under the municipal organs. Alal this brought about disarray in Jewish communal life, whose leaders suddenly lost most of their traditional authority. No less confused were the Christians of Belorussia, who had been ordered to treat the despised Jews as equals. In response to queries from perplexed administrators concerning taxation of Jews, St. Petersburg on May 2, 1783, gave an unequivocal answer:

> Jews [*evrei*] living in the Belorussian provinces are to be taxed according to the estate in which they inscribe themselves, without distinction of origin and religion (PSZ, No. 15,724, Pt. III, Art. 6).

The formula "without distinction of origin and religion" (*bez razlichiia roda i zakona*) became the basis for the treatment of Jews throughout the decade of the 1780s, the most enlightened in the history of tsarist Russia's treatment of Jewry.

That legal and social equality was not an unmixed blessing became evident to Jews in 1782–3 when they were subjected to two laws bearing on the merchants and townsmen of the Empire. On July 2, 1782, a decree was issued regarding the Russian merchants and townsmen of the province Olonetsk, which stated that they should not be permitted to reside in villages, so as not to enrich themselves at the peasants' expense, but were to be moved into the cities (PSZ, No. 15,459). Half a year later, this law was extended to cover the entire Empire. Toward the end of 1782, members of urban communities in Russia were forbidden to deal in spirits, commerce in which was declared the exclusive privilege of the government and the nobility. Both these measures were intended to safeguard the interests of the landed estate, so dear to the heart of Catherine, but they struck unintentionally at the basis of Jewish economic life. For although by now all the Jews were enrolled in urban communities, most of them continued to reside in the countryside, where many made a living leasing from nobles the right to distill and sell alcoholic beverages. As Gessen justly observes, measures which affected only some Christians in Russia affected all of Russia's Jews.[19]

Had Belorussia remained in the charge of Chernyshev it is possible that these directives would not have been implemented, except in a token manner. But in February 1782, Chernyshev was recalled to become Commander in Chief of Moscow. His place was taken by P. G. Passek, a fop and a fool, who sought to make up for his habitual indolence by sporadic bursts of zeal. Following an imperial decree of May 3, 1783,

he forbade Jews on his territories to distill or sell liquor, as well as landlords to lease to them distilleries and taverns.[20] At the same time, he gave orders to expel Jews from villages into the towns. According to a contemporary Jewish account, thousands of Jewish families were forcibly evicted at this time.[21] The hardship from these twin blows must have been extreme.

As long as Jews were to be subject to magistrates and *ratushi*, it was essential for them to have their representatives sit on both these institutions. For unless Jewish judges officiated in the new courts there was no way of ensuring that litigations between Jews, based on Talmudic law, could be equitably adjudicated. In tax matters, too, where the new legislation left much to the conscience of the merchant, a friendly magistrate was important. Jews were very eager, therefore, to participate in the municipal elections scheduled for 1783–85. But they immediately ran into the hostility of the Christian (largely Catholic) urban population for whom the sight of a Jew voting was no less repugnant than that of a Negro voter was to become to the post-Civil War American South. Under the pressure of his Polish subjects, Passek requested St. Petersburg to clarify whether Jews elected to municipal posts (and thus, *ipso facto*, members of the Imperial Civil Service) could assume their posts. Again the response was firm: yes, Jewish merchants (and, by implication, townsmen), elected to municipal offices "could not be prevented from assuming the actual obligations entrusted to them."[22]

Jews were thus allowed to vote, but a variety of devices was employed to ensure that their influence on the results would be minimal. In most places Jews were forced to vote in electoral chambers in accord with arbitrarily set quotas; elsewhere they were altogether intimidated to stay home. The effectiveness of this chicanery can be seen from the results of the elections. In 1783, Jews constituted the majority (58.6 per cent) of the urban communities of Belorussia: in the towns of Mogilev province there lived 7,447 Christian and 15,419 (67%) Jewish members of urban communities; in those of Polotsk province, 8,740 and 7,422 (47%), respectively. In Mogilev, Jews were in a majority in all 12 towns; in Polotsk, in 7 out of 11.[23] Had the elections been conducted honestly, Jews might have been expected to win 19 out of 23 mayoralties. In fact, they won only 8 (7 in Mogilev and 1 in Polotsk).[24] Here and there Jews also gained minor elective offices.

Viewed abstractly, these results were most disappointing. But looked upon from the perspective of time they represented a major event in Jewish history. According to Salo Baron, at this time Jews were admitted to municipal elections only in one other European country, namely Tuscany.[25] To have allowed Jews to participate in elections, even if on terms of somewhat formal equality with Christians, and actually to gain

over one-third of the mayoral posts in two provinces, was an event without precedent in European, let alone East European, history. It certainly deserves greater attention in the accounts of Russian Jewry than it generally receives.

The experience of the Belorussian Jews with municipal elections underscored the dilemma which emancipation was in time to bring Jews everywhere. As a pariah nation, confined within their self-governing communities, they had been far less dependent on the fairness of the general administration than they were to become with the attainment of formal equality: in other words, no equality was in many ways preferable to sham equality. The crucial issue was justice. In the *kahal* courts, now abolished, disputes had been settled in accord with Talmudic law. Under the urban reforms, merchants and townsmen came under the jurisdiction of magistrates whose Christian judges knew nothing of Talmudic law and could not even communicate with the Yiddish-speaking litigants. A further complication arose from the fact that Jews could not swear the Christian oath required in city courts. As a Jewish complaint submitted in 1786 stated in this connection:

> . . . if, in the current elections, based on the Imperial Charter of the Cities, members of Jewish communities will fail to be elected to judgeships as well as to membership in urban magistrates (*ratushi*) and city councils (*dumy*) in equal proportion to Christians there will be no one in the magistrates to judge Jews in disputes subject to a Jewish trial. Because at the conclusion of Article 127 of the City Charter . . . it is stated that all matters coming before the urban magistrate are to be adjudicated in Russian for Russians, and for foreigners in their language. And if no Jews will be elected to city councils, then from the decisions of Christians affecting city needs the Jewish community can be brought to great ruin insofar as the condition of Jews can be known to no one but ourselves.[26]

* * *

The events of 1782–83—expulsions from the countryside, prohibitions on the alcohol trade, the loss of *kahal* autonomy, especially in matters of justice, and the tampering with electoral procedures—induced the leaders of the Jewish communities of Belorussia toward the end of 1784 to petition Catherine for a redress of grievances. Their principal points may be summarized as follows:

1. the laws prohibiting the Empire's merchants and townsmen from dealing in spirits deprived Jews of a traditional means of making a living and should be suspended as far as they were concerned, at any rate, temporarily;

2. the landlords of Belorussia suffered grievous losses from ordinances prohibiting them to lease distilleries and taverns to Jews, for which reason these ordinances should be suspended as well;

3. Jews should be allowed to deal in spirits and to reside unmolested in the villages;

4. the local administrators of Belorussia should be made to observe imperial decrees directing them to ensure that Jews enjoyed equal electoral rights with Christians;

5. Jews should be allowed to settle disputes among themselves in their *kahal* courts, and, in general, the powers of the *kahals* ought to be restored;

6. Jews residing in Riga should be permitted to enrol in the ranks of that city's merchants and townsmen.[27]

In March 1785, Catherine turned this petition over to the Senate, which the following month requested from Governor General Passek his reactions. Passek responded that in forbidding Jews to handle alcoholic beverages or to reside in the countryside he was merely enforcing imperial legislation of 1782–83 bearing on the middle estate. He did not deny discrimination against Jews in municipal elections but felt it unnecessary to apologize, apparently considering it self-evident that Jews ought not be allowed to capture the majority of the urban posts, as they certainly would have done had no discrimination been practised. Finally, he stated that he saw no need for separate courts for Jews now that they were subject, like everyone else, to magistrates.[28]

Fortunately for the Belorussian Jews the Senate was better disposed toward them. On the basis of the evidence which it had gathered, it issued on May 7, 1786, an edict under the title "Concerning the Protection of the Rights of Jews in Russia in Respect to their Legal Responsibility, Trade, and Industry" (PSZ, No. 16,391).[29] This ordinance was on the face of it, at any rate, of such importance that some historians refer to it as the "Charter [*Polozhenie*] of 1786," juxtaposing it with the charters of the nobility and the cities issued the preceding year.

Underlying the 1786 decree was the fundamental principle that Jews had become fully-fledged subjects of the Russian crown:

> Inasmuch as on the basis of the instructions of Her Majesty people of the Jewish faith have already been accorded a status equal to that of others, it follows that in all instances the rule is to be observed that all Jews must be able to enjoy the privileges and rights appropriate to their calling and fortune, without distinction of origin and religion.

To emphasize the earnestness with which this principle was viewed, the decree forbade any reference to Polish laws which had discriminated against Jews.

The specific Jewish requests were disposed of on their merits. The Senate refused to make an exception for Jews and allow them to deal freely in alcoholic beverages in the cities: this right was to remain a monopoly of magistrates from which they had to lease it. It granted the Jews, however, the much more important request that they be permitted to continue leasing distilleries and taverns in the countryside: a concession motivated at least as much by concern for the wellbeing of the Polish landlords as for that of the Jews. This concession meant that the Senate had to make a further exception and authorize Jewish merchants and townsmen to reside in the villages; though intended to be "temporary," this permission became in effect permanent. Further expulsions were stopped. The Senate reconfirmed that Jews were not to be discriminated against in municipal elections, on which grounds it rejected as redundant their request for separate courts. But it did restore to the *kahals* some of their previous competence, empowering them to settle purely religious disputes, issue passports, run schools, and apportion taxes which Jews owed to the magistrate as well as tax Jews for expenses of a religious nature. Jews were given leave to swear Hebrew oaths in court. The petition to have them admitted into the urban community in Riga was turned down: the Senate felt it could not act on the matter because:

> there was no special instruction of Her Majesty's concerning free Jewish enrolment in the ranks of merchants and townsmen of cities other than those in the Belorussian provinces.

The decree of May 7, 1786, constitutes a landmark in the history of modern Jewry. It first formally enunciated the principle that Jews were entitled to all the rights of their estate, and that discrimination against them on the grounds of religion or origin was illegal.[30] The decree anticipated by more than five years the celebrated declaration of the French National Assembly extending to Jews civil equality. Now, of course, in eighteenth century Russia, when the estate structure was still strictly maintained, equality did not mean the rights of modern "citizenship," for such did not exist. It did mean, however, that Jews had estate equality with Christian merchants and townsmen, which was the only kind of equality then known. Indeed, the decree of May 7 went beyond establishing mere equality with Christians, for it also gave Jews two privileges not accorded to Christians of the *tiers état:* the right to reside in the countryside and there to deal in spirits. Powers were also vested in the *kahals* (such as the right of self-taxation) which Christian merchants and townsmen could not boast for their communal organizations. The principal limitation imposed on Jews lay in the refusal of membership in the community of Riga. This decision, which at the time

appeared to involve a minor and easily rectifiable issue, in the long run assumed paramount importance in the life of Russian Jewry and quite vitiated the other, very generous concessions.

The 1786 decree was so far ahead of its time and was to meet with such opposition from the Christian population of Belorussia that it was never enforced. Golitsyn maintains that subsequent Russian legislation ignored it and it never really went into effect.[31] Catherine might have had occasion once again to reflect that noble intentions, even when accompanied by the authority to make them good, were not enough.

* * *

We have now reached a stage in the narrative which most scholars regard as a turning point in the history of Russian Jewry. On December 23, 1791, a decree of the Imperial government (PSZ, No. 17,006) rejected as without merit the protest of Jewish traders, submitted in September 1790, that they had been improperly denied the right to enrol in the urban communities of Smolensk and Moscow.[32] Historians view this ruling as a sudden reversal of previous practices and the beginning of the Pale of Settlement. Dubnow speaks of it as an "innovation which for the first time deprived the Jews of Russia of the freedom of movement."[33] Gessen takes a similar view: referring to this decree, he says that "unexpectedly there emerged the so-called Pale of Permanent Jewish Settlement."[34] The same opinion is expressed by some leading non-Jewish historians. The importance generally attached to this law is puzzling, considering that the scholars in question were familiar with the antecedents of the legislation bearing on Russian Jewry.

To being with, it must be borne in mind that in the period with which we are concerned no social group in Russia except for the nobles (*dvorianstvo*) enjoyed the right of "free movement," and even they had secured this right a mere six years earlier, in the Charter of the Nobility. All the taxable groups of the Empire, including the urban estate in whose ranks Russian Jews were enrolled, were attached to communal organizations. Christian merchants could not move from one town to another at will, either: such movement was hedged with very elaborate bureaucratic procedures.[35] And speaking more broadly, no estate in eighteenth century Russia (the post-1785 nobility again excepted) possessed any generalized freedoms or rights: these are notions derived from a feudal tradition of which Russia knew nothing. In Russia, freedoms and rights, such as there were, came by royal favor and were attached to duties borne on behalf of the state: they were invariably granted to specific individuals and for limited periods of time (never in hereditary possession). In the patrimonial regime of Russia, which was still entrenched in the eighteenth century, nothing was permitted that was not

permitted explicitly; or, to put it in other words, whatever was not specifically allowed was deemed forbidden. Hence, the Crown had no need legally to limit the "right" of persons or groups, such as the Jews, to do anything, such as move freely throughout the Empire.

Between 1772 and 1786, Russian Jews did receive from the Crown a number of discrete rights: they were allowed to practice their religion, to own property, to reside and deal in spirits in the villages, to enjoy communal self-government, and to enter urban communities on equal terms with Christians. These rights they were given in the provinces of Mogilev and Polotsk, as well as (though this matter was left legally vague) the territories of Wallachia and New Russia. Up to this point, however, they had not been given authority to establish permanent residence outside these four regions: hence, in terms of Russian legal custom, they were forbidden to do so. As we have seen, in 1786, when pro-Jewish sentiment in the Imperial government stood at its height, Jews were denied permission to enrol in the merchant corporations of Riga on the grounds that no "special instruction" had been issued by the Empress permitting such activity outside the two Belorussian provinces. In December 1789, in response to a Jewish petition to be given access to the Smolensk urban community, the Senate turned them down once again.[36] In view of these facts it seems inappropriate to see in the 1791 edict an innovation. Indeed, the contrary is true: for the Jewish protest of September 1790 to have been acted on favourably, it would have required a deliberate decision to depart from precedent.

The question now arises why Catherine failed in the more favorable environment of the 1789s to take the step which she had almost taken in 1762, namely, to allow Jews access to the interior of Russia. To answer this question, one must say something about the situation of the Russian middle class. It is difficult to conceive of a middle class confronting more unfavorable conditions than those under which the Russian one had to labor throughout its history. In Muscovite and early Imperial Russia it had to contend with regalia and monopolies which removed from free commerce virtually everything on which a profit was to be made. In the 1760s and 1770s, owing to Catherine's predilection for *laissez faire*, most of these restrictions were abolished. But concurrently, trade and manufacture, supposedly a privilege of the middle estate, were thrown open to the entire population. The merchants could not compete effectively with landlord entrepreneurs who paid no taxes and enjoyed exclusive access to serf labor; nor with serfs and state peasants, many of them protected by landlords, who began at this time to engage in widespread commercial and manufacturing activities.[37] At the Legislative Commission of 1767–68, merchants bitterly complained of their hard life.

Now if the Jewish population had had a normal social structure—that is, if there were among them landlords and peasants as well as merchants and artisans—their mass influx into Russia would not have caused much turmoil. Like Germans, they could have been used to colonize the frontier, and to perform a variety of other functions on behalf of the state. But as all the Jews were in law (and nearly all, in fact) traders and artisans, under the estate legislation then in force, on entering Russia they would have had to settle in the cities, a move which immediately would have pitted them against the native middle class—impoverished, illiterate, and pre-capitalist in its mentality. This competition would have proven exceedingly difficult for Russians to meet. In Muscovite Russia, merchants had complained so insistently against foreign competition that toward the end of the seventeenth century Western businessmen were for practical purposes excluded from that country, except as transients. To have allowed Jews in the 1780s free entry into Russia, would have meant exposing the Russian merchant class once again to fierce foreign rivalry with which they were incompetent to cope. It would have resulted in further impoverishment of an already poor estate, and caused great disaffection in the cities.

There was no shortage of evidence to this effect. In the 1780s many Jews travelled on business to Moscow; three of them succeeded in inscribing themselves in the first guild of that city. These merchants dealt mostly in foreign goods, probably luxuries destined for the many rich nobles in who had town houses there. Thanks to their superior business skills, Jews regularly undersold Russian merchants. The latter grumbled to the authorities. Hostility toward Jews came to a head over the activities of one Nota, the richest Jew in Moscow and the leader of the community there, who apparently absconded abroad without settling his debts. On February 15, 1790, the Moscow merchant community lodged with the city's Governor General a formal complaint against alleged Jewish business malpractices. They said that the ability of Jews (*zhidy*) to charge less for imported goods proved that they had smuggled them in without paying customs. Appealing to his patriotic sentiments, they reminded the Governor that Jews had never been allowed into inner Russia. They urged him to expel those who had managed to establish residence in Moscow, and to refuse entry permits in the future.[38]

A few years earlier such an appeal might have gone unheeded. But the outbreak of the French Revolution had added to the Jewish issue, on top of the religious and economic dimensions, also a political one. The Revolution had frightened Catherine out of her wits. She was convinced that if it were to triumph, civilization would collapse and Europe revert to the Dark Ages. She also believed that it was the result of a conspiracy, the tentacles of which spread throughout Europe. One

of its principal instruments was the Free Masonic movement, which had attained great popularity in Russia during her reign: the Moscow lodges displayed especially keen activity, engaging in all sorts of educational, publishing, and philanthropic work. As the Revolution evolved from its moderate phase towards extremism, her fears intensified and so did her readiness to employ whatever means were required to keep what she regarded as the "French infection" away from her country's borders.

It is with this purpose in mind that on February 19, 1790, she appointed to the post of Governor General of Moscow Prince Alexander Prozorovskii. The Prince was a professional soldier, a great believer in discipline, and a totally devoted servant of his Empress. He mistrusted all foreigners and things foreign, including the Free Masons.[39] Catherine felt a strong dislike for him, but she thought him ideally suited to extirpate seditious tendencies in the old capital city with its hordes of idle rich and thousands of merchants. Prozorovskii applied himself zealously to his task. He immediately forbade the importation of foreign literature into Moscow and esstablished surveillance over the city's French colony. He also went after the Free Masons, whose lodges he ordered closed. Two years later, it was on his orders that the police arrested N. I. Novikov, a leading figure in the Russian Enlightenment and the country's foremost Mason.

Prozorovskii kept a watchful eye on the Moscow merchant community, whom he suspected, not without reason, of harboring oppositional elements. It did not escape him that one of Novikov's most generous patrons, for example, was a rich Muscovite businessman. In a report which he submitted to Catherine in the first year in office, he emphasized the inroads the Free Masons allegedly had made among Moscow traders and darkly hinted at the existence of "merchant clubs."[40] Catherine, who was well aware of the role that the *tiers état* had played in the French Revolution was not disposed to treat these warnings lightly.

The protest of the Moscow merchant community against the presence of Jews was one of the first items of business that confronted Prozorovskii. It concerned him if for no other reason than disaffection among merchants had grave security implications. Furthermore, he probably was not too happy himself about the movement of Jews between Belorussia and Moscow. Jews were known to be active as smugglers: it was not unreasonable to assume that among the contraband they carried from Poland there might have been French political literature for which a ready market existed among Moscow's cosmopolitan aristocracy. In June 1790, Catherine forbade Belorussian Jews to import religious books from Poland, authorizing them instead to establish their own typography (PSZ, No. 16,877)—a move that was undoubtedly inspired by considerations of state security. Prozorovskii went further and sometime between

February and September 1790 ordered the handful of Jews established in Moscow to leave.[41] Two years later, all foreign Jews were ordered to leave Russia.[42]

The Jewish petition of September 1790 was apparently meant to test Prozorovskii's order expelling Jews from Moscow. But times had changed and in 1791 there was no inclination in St. Petersburg to meet them half way. Free entry of Jews into inner Russia could only spell trouble, especially in Moscow, the empire's business centre, into which the majority of the incoming Jews would certainly have moved. It would have caused disaffection among the merchants and it also might have made it extremely difficult to prevent the spread of subversive literature. After 1789, such political considerations heavily outweighed calculations of an economic nature which had been uppermost in the government's mind the preceding quarter century.

The petition of Jews against their exclusion from the urban communities of Smolensk and Moscow was discussed in October 1790 in the State Council. Existing legislation was consulted. It proved that the complaint was unfounded: the laws on the statute books did not give Jews authority to join urban communities outside the two Belorussian provinces. On further deliberation, the Council decided that changing the existing laws by enlarging the area where Jews could become merchants and townsmen would not be "useful". The Council, however, did see benefits in legitimizing the presence of Jews in the Black Sea area, recommending that they be allowed to join urban communities on the territories of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida (Crimea), the latter of which had been recently conquered from the Turks.[43] For unknown reasons, Catherine waited a full year before acting on these recommendations. They were finally promulgated in the decree of December 23, 1791.

* * *

The Second and Third Partition of Poland, in 1793 and 1795, respectively, vastly expanded Russian possessions in the West. An estimated 5.7 million new subjects came under Catherine's rule. The number of Jews in these areas is difficult to assess, but 500,000 is probably a fair estimate.[44] Thus, at the time of Catherine's death in 1796, the Empire had a Jewish population of approximately 600,000 or c. 1.5 per cent of the whole.

By this time, the basic principles governing the administration of territories taken from Poland and its Jewish inhabitants had been sufficiently well worked out that no new rulings were required. Catherine's instructions concerning the territories acquired in the second and third partitions (PSZ, Nos. 17,264 and 17,418) made no special provisions for

Jews: they merely restated the principle first enunciated in the *Plakat* of 1772 that all new subjects would retain their rights and privileges.

On June 23 1794, an important edict was issued which historians, with justification, see as the first of what was to be a long stream of legislative acts discriminating against Russian Jews. The decree in question (PSZ, No. 17,224) consisted of two parts. Part one allowed Jews in certain provinces and areas (which were defined) to enrol in the ranks of merchants and townsmen. Part two ordered all Jews who did so to pay a tax twice the amount that due from Christians of the same estate, *i.e.*, a two rather than one per cent income tax on capital from Jewish merchants, and a four rather than a two ruble soul tax from townsmen. According to the decree, Jews who did not wish to pay this double tax could, upon the prepayment of a three-year tax, leave the confines of the Russian Empire.

The double tax instituted in 1794 is subject to differing interpretations. The merchant Nota (see the earlier discussion on his activities in Moscow) believed that its main purpose was to encourage more Jews in the overcrowded towns and villages of what had been eastern Poland to move into New Russia and the Crimea (where, at the time, no taxes were collected). Gessen subscribes to this interpretation.[45] The other view holds that the law was mainly fiscal in intent. The Imperial government at the time happened to run a huge deficit, for which reason it increased considerably the tax load for all classes of the population: in 1794, the soul tax for all townsmen was doubled (which meant that for Jews it was in effect quadrupled). Requiring non-Orthodox inhabitants to pay a higher tax was not an unusual procedure in Imperial Russia: until 1782, Old Believers were regularly required to pay a double soul tax. Given the budgetary difficulties of the time and the emergency measures taken to raise revenue, it seems most plausible to ascribe the 1794 decree to fiscal considerations.[46]

As concerns the implications of this measure, it was undeniably discriminatory and contrary to the oft-repeated injunctions of the government that Jews were to be treated exactly as were Christians of the same estate. However, before one ascribes the measure to antisemitism, one must remember that Jews were not only victims of discrimination but also its beneficiaries. We have noted that in 1779 the Jewish soul tax had been cut in half, and thereby set at a rate lower than that of Christians in the same area: this fact, generally ignored by historians, must be offset against the higher tax of 1794. In both cases, as was Russian practice, the issue was decided by the ability to pay. In 1779, the tax for Belorussian Jews had been reduced most likely because they had been found to be extremely poor; fifteen years later it was raised because the Jews acquired in the second and third partitions were deemed

better off. That urban Jews were in fact relatively richer than urban Christians can be judged by statistics showing what percentage of Jews qualified as merchants, *i.e.*, disposed of capital in excess of 500 rubles. In the provinces taken from Poland in the second partition (Podole, Volhynia, and Minsk), Jews constituted only around 10 per cent of the population, but accounted for 54 per cent of the merchant estate.[47]

The real importance of the 1794 edict lay not so much in the double tax—repealed in 1817—but in those passages which for the first time formally defined the territories open to Jewish settlement. These included the two Belorussian provinces, the territories in the Black Sea region opened to them officially in 1791 (Ekaterinoslav and Taurida) and the three provinces taken from Poland in the Second Partition (Minsk, Izyaslav, and Bratslav, the latter two renamed Volhynia and Podole). In addition, three Ukrainian provinces previously closed to Jews were now opened to them: Kiev, Chernigov, and Novgorod-Seversky. Thus, it was the 1794 rather than the 1791 edict which proscribed a pale of Jewish settlement, and this it accomplished not by restricting the area where Jews could reside but by enlarging it. In 1795, after the Third Partition, the two Lithuanian provinces Vilno and Slonim were added to this region.

* * *

Our conclusions may be summarised as follows:

1. Interpreted against the background of Russian laws and institutions, the evidence indicates that in the reign of Catherine II a genuine effort was made by the central government to treat Jews as a religious minority eligible to enjoy legal equality and all such rights as were accorded Christians of the same status; this effort was ahead of anything done on behalf of Jews in Western Europe at the time;

2. It failed largely because of the resistance of groups of the population most affected by it, namely the Polish inhabitants of the Western provinces, who sabotaged the attempt to integrate Jews into urban self-government, and the merchants of Moscow who prevented Jews from joining urban communities in inner Russia. The local Russian administrators tended to side with these elements, and the central authorities were too weak to impose their will; after the outbreak of the French Revolution, security considerations discouraged St. Petersburg from pushing Jewish equality any further;

3. Although the basic rules bearing on Russian Jewry—notably, the inscription of all Jews in urban ranks, and the limitation of the area open to Jewish settlement—were indeed laid down in Catherine's reign, they were not intended as disabilities; the few measures favoring Jewish converts or Karaites were more than offset by privileges granted to Jews,

such as the right, unavailable to Christians of the middle estate, to reside in villages. The responsibility for twisting these rules into disabilities lies mainly on imperial governments of the nineteenth century.

NOTES

1. Simon Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes,* Vols. VII–X (Berlin, 1928–29); *History of the Jews of Russia and Poland,* 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1916–20).

2. Louis Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia,* Vol. I (New Haven, Conn., 1944).

3. S. W. Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (New York–London, 1964).

4. Iulii Gessen, *Evrei v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1906) and *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii,* Vol. I, 2nd ed. (Leningrad, 1925).

5. For example, N. N. Golitsyn, *Istoriia russkogo zakonodatel'stva o evreiakh* (St. Petersburg, 1886) and M. F. Shugurov, "Istoriia evreev v Rossii," *Russkii arkhiv,* No. 2 (1894), pp. 129–81.

6. V. A. Bilbasov, *Istoriia Ekateriny Vtoroi,* Vol. I (Berlin, 1900), pp. 459–62.

7. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte,* Vol. VII, pp. 254–55; both petitions date from 1764.

8. A. N. Pypin, ed., *Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II,* Vol. XII: *Avtobiograficheskie zapiski* (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 570. Cf. *Russkii arkhiv,* No. 3 (1880), p. 3. According to Golitsyn (*Istoriia,* pp. 303–04), there is no record of this session in the protocols of the Senate.

9. Golitsyn, *Istoriia,* p. 311.

10. Iu. Gessen, "Stremlenie Ekateriny II vodvorit' evreev v Rossii (1794 g.)," *Evreiskaia starina,* No. III/IV (1915), pp. 338–46.

11. I. E. Ioffe, "Iz zhizni pervoi evreiskoi obshchiny v Rige," *Perezhitoe,* No. II (1910), p. 190.

12. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva,* Vol. LI (1886), p. 440.

13. *Russkii arkhiv,* No. 3 (1880), p. 3.

14. *Istoriia,* p. 47.

15. *Weltgeschichte,* Vol. VII, p. 256.

16. On Chernyshev, see *Russkii biograficheskii slovar',* Volume "Chaadaev-Shvitkov" (St. Petersburg, 1905), pp. 313–18.

17. Later on, the Jewish tax, for unknown reasons, was cut in half: an edict, dated July 3, 1779 (PSZ, No. 14,892) set the Jewish soul tax at 50 kopecks. Christian urban inhabitants in the area were required to pay 60 kopecks, which was also half of what they would have been required to pay in inner Russia. It may have been an acknowledgement of the prevailing poverty in this area.

18. Gessen, *Istoriia,* p. 57.

19. *Ibid.,* pp. 62–63.

20. Gessen, *Evrei,* p. 458.

21. Solomon Bennet, cited in Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte,* Vol. VII, p. 260.

22. Gessen, *Istoriia,* p. 58.

23. Based on table, *ibid.*, p. 61.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.

25. Baron, *The Russian Jews*, p. 18. He refers to the ordinances of 1778 which permitted the Jews of Tuscany to join the newly instituted municipal councils; Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy* (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 425.

26. Golitsyn, *Istoriia*, p. 348. The statment about the refusal of St. Petersburg to allow Jews separate courts refers to the edict of May 7, 1786, discussed below.

27. The text of the petition is in Gessen, *Evrei*, pp. 456–58. The request to be allowed into Riga is not in this petition, but its existence can be inferred from the answer of the government, summarized below.

28. Gessen, *Evrei*, pp. 458–61.

29. There seems to be some confusion about the dating of this edict: in the Full Collection of Laws it is dated May 7, but elsewhere January 21: cf. Golitsyn, *Istoriia*, p. 347, and Gessen, *Evrei*, p. 456.

30. In June 1786, the Jews of Vitebsk complained to the Empress once again that they were being discriminated against in municipal elections. Catherine addressed on July 16, 1786, an angry note to Passek demanding that her orders concerning full equality for Jews be "enforced unfailingly and without delay" and that legal proceedings be initiated against any violators: Golitsyn, *Istoriia*, p. 357.

31. *Istoriia*, pp. 337–38.

32. *Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo Soveta*, Vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1869), pp. 365–66.

33. *Weltgeschichte*, Vol. VIII, p. 347.

34. *Istoriia*, p. 77.

35. P. G. Ryndziunskii, *Gorodskoe grazhdanstvo doreformennoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1958), pp. 46–47.

36. Shugurov, "Istoriia," pp. 163, 164; this decree is not in the Full Collection of Laws.

37. On this subject, see my *Russia under the Old Regime* (London, 1974), pp. 191–220.

38. Shugurov, "Istoriia," pp. 163–67.

39. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, Vol. "Pritvits-Reis" (St. Petersburg, 1910), pp. 4–11, and M. N. Longinov, *Novikov i moskovskie martinisty* (Moscow, 1867), pp. 300–01.

40. P. Pekarskii, *Dopolneniia k istorii masonstva v Rossii v XVII st.*, in *Sbornik Otdela Russkogo Iazyka i Slovenosti pri Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1869), pp. 128, 130.

41. Shugurov, "Istoriia," pp. 163–64.

42. Golitsyn, *Istoriia*, p. 360.

43. *Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo Soveta*, Vol. I, pp. 365–68.

44. This figure is arrived at by assuming that the proportion of Jews to Christians in the territories taken in the Second and Third Partitions was the same as in Belorussia, namely 1 to 10. Censuses of 1797–1800 showed the

number of Jewish tax-payers as 150,000, which, if our estimate is correct, would indicate 4 persons per household: cf. Gessen, *Istoriia*, pp. 84–85.

45. Gessen, *Istoriia*, p. 86.

46. In June 1795, the Karaite Jews of the Crimea petitioned to be exempted from the double tax; the request was granted: PSZ, No. 17,340.

47. Based on statistical information provided in Gessen, *Istoriia*, pp. 84–85.

CHAPTER 4

The Russian Military Colonies, 1810–1831

The so-called "military colonies" of Arakcheev are an institution generally maligned and abused but inadequately studied. In books dealing with the period they are usually identified with the reactionary phase in the rule of Alexander I, in line with his refutation of the liberal program of his younger days and his support of reactionary elements both at home and abroad. And, yet, even if much of the abuse heaped on the military colonies is justified, it seems that the motives behind this vast venture and the basic reasons for its failure have not been justly appraised by most historians. Upon closer investigation there emerges the fact that the settlements were designed as part of a reform movement envisaged by Alexander and that in spirit and program the entire undertaking stood closer to the earlier, more idealistic part of Alexander's life than to the policy of repression usually identified with the second half of his reign. As such it offers an interesting side light on the mentality of Alexander and his period, and its failure is not devoid of significance for the student of social movements in general.

The creation of the military colonies is usually explained by the financial difficulties in which the Russian government found itself following the Napoleonic wars, and there is no doubt that such considerations played a significant part. In 1815 almost one-third of the Russian budget was devoted to the upkeep of the army, and the leading political role played by the victors over the French in Europe made the retention of such a big army a necessity. In view of the disastrous condition of the Russian treasury, the maintenance at government expense of a tremendous horde of idle men was obviously undesirable, and any plan which promised to make the armed forces self-supporting from the financial point of view was welcome.

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But, while a factor, financial considerations were not the main motive for the venture. As a matter of fact, the idea originated earlier, before the war of 1812, and the war with the French, far from giving impetus to the enterprise, temporarily interrupted its progress. Nothing indicates more clearly the actual intention of the project than the history of its origin.[1]

As far as it is possible to ascertain, the idea first germinated in Alexander's mind upon his visit in 1810 to the estate of Alexis Alexandrovich Arakcheev in the village of Gruzino, some seventy-five miles east of St. Petersburg. Arakcheev, a brutal and generally disliked officer, who rose rapidly to high standing under Paul I because of his blind obedience to the crown and ability both to serve devotedly and to rule with an iron hand, succeeded in making his estate a model of efficiency and rational planning. The roads leading to and from Gruzino were in excellent shape; the river was regulated; the homes of the peasants, identical in shape, were symmetrically arranged along the roads and were immaculate. For the peasants of his estate Arakcheev established a bank, from which they could borrow money without interest for agricultural construction and implements. Nothing escaped his eye and keen attention; and the results, on the surface, were brilliant: a well-managed property such as it was difficult to find in contemporary Russia. The estate was frequently visited by hosts of tourists, writers, statesmen, officers, and diplomats, for whose use Arakcheev published a special guidebook of the property and who were unanimous in singing its praises.

Alexander was no less favorably impressed. During his sojourn there he was not only entertained but was taken to the villages, which he inspected personally and in which he expressed keen interest and delighted surprise. After his departure he wrote to Arakcheev a letter full of praise, commending him on the intelligent management of the estate and recognizing the value of wise agricultural management as the foundation of the state.[2] To his sister, Grand Duchess Catherine, he described his visit in even more glowing and enthusiastic terms:[3]

> This is truly a charming place, and the order which prevails here is unique. What evoked my admiration above all is the arrangement of the villages; I am certain that nothing comparable exists in the whole empire. . . . Show George this letter. I beg him very earnestly to have General Arakcheev lead him through the villages which he has shown me, and observe: (1) the order which prevails everywhere; (2) the neatness; (3) the construction of roads and plantations; (4) a kind of symmetry and elegance which pervades the place. The village streets have *precisely this kind of neatness* for which I have been clamoring in the cities; the best proof that

> what I demand is possible. . . . How much do the streets in Novgorod, Valdai, Nizhnii-Volochok, Torzhok, and of Krestsy stand in need of being kept in such a manner! What a palpable difference! I repeat: the villages here are proof that this is possible.

The idea that emerged in Alexander's mind in conection with his visit to Gruzino was a thorough reform of the Russian countryside to be accomplished by the thousands of uniformed men who in time of peace were sitting idly and draining the resources of the treasury. Russia would be covered with a veritable network of Gruzinos, hundreds of villages which the army would make as neat, orderly, and elegant as the estate of Arakcheev. If it were possible to utilize the untapped reservoir of human energy of the Russian army to solve some of the most pressing economic and social problems, to westernize the Russian village, to raise the living standards of the more backward areas, and ease the hard lot of the Russian soldier, all without cost to the government, then such a measure, no matter how difficult and unusual, would be well worth trying. It was such considerations as these that lay behind the creation of the military colonies and explain the enthusiasm with which Alexander undertook the project and the stubbornness with which he defended it even after many of its shortcomings became obvious.

Briefly, the idea behind the military colonies was to remove the troops from the barracks and billets and to form them into a new class of peasant-soldiers on lands donated by the crown especially for that purpose. These colonists, merged with the local inhabitants of those areas and isolated from the remainder of the population, were to devote themselves in peacetime solely to the cultivation of land and manufacture in order to provide for all their needs. In the future the country-wide draft was to be lifted, and the military colonies were to provide all the soldiers for the armed forces.

Full of enthusiasm for his new idea, Alexander dispatched to Gruzino one of his aides, requesting Arakcheev that he talk with him and show him his estate. At the same time, he had Count Mordvinov draw up a plan for the military colonies.

The very fact that the idea of the military colonies was conceived before the Napoleonic invasion took place and that the first settlements were established in 1810, before the pressure of financial difficulties became so serious as later, as well as their origin in connection with Alexander's visit to Arakcheev's estate, indicates that the reason for the project was not merely financial. The sums spent by Alexander on the colonies, in order to provide them with the very best equipment and housing, were much larger than necessary, had purely utilitarian con-

siderations been uppermost in the tsar's mind.[4] Finally, the fact that some of the most backward areas of Russia were chosen for the settlements indicates that the scope of the undertaking went beyond answering the immediate needs of the treasury.

The first colonies were founded in the Mogilev province in 1810, shortly after Alexander's visit to Gruzino. The advent of the war, however, interrupted their growth. The settlers marched off to fight, and it was not until after the defeat of Napoleon that the project was resumed, this time on a vast scale. The process of settling regiments was revived in 1816 and continued until 1821. Those five years mark the period of the greatest expansion of the military colonies. Although many of them continued to exist for several decades, few new ones were created after 1821.

Alexander, who personally supervised the progress of his pet project, himself decided which regiments were to be settled and where the settlement was to take place. A military unit selected for this purpose was removed from the command of the regular army staff and was placed under the direction of Count Arakcheev. The area granted for the purpose was withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the local authorities, exempted from all taxes and obligations, and was not to be entered by government officials, including the police, without the permission of the military command. In this manner the military colonies were completely isolated from the rest of Russian society and, immune from interference on the part of the civil and military authorities, rested under the immediate command of the tsar himself.

Each regiment was regrouped according to specific rules to prepare it for its new function and life. All married soldiers with six years of service or more and with agricultural experience were separated from their units and organized to form the so-called "settled battalion" (*poselennyi batal'on*): the nucleus of the colonies and of the new military peasantry. Permanently exempt from combat duty, they were to receive property in the form of land, implements, and livestock and were to perform most of the agricultural work. If the number of qualified soldiers was insufficient, the settled battalion was completed from the ranks of the peasants of military age living in the villages given to the regiment. The remaining soldiers and peasants formed the "active battalion" (*deistvuiushchii batal'on*) and were to live with their families in the homes of the settled soldiers and help them in their work, in return for which service they were to receive food and other necessities from their hosts. In times of war they were to be transformed into combat troops and depart for the front, leaving their families and possessions under the guardianship of the settled soldiers. Both groups were to devote two to three days a week to military drill and exercises except during harvests.

In such a manner, as contemporaries expressed it, soldiers were turned into peasants and peasants into soldiers.

There were four main regions in which settlements took place, each of which was occupied by ten or more regiments: one in the Novgorod province (north of Lake Ilmen, along the Volkhov River and south of the lake, around Staraia Russa) and three in the south, given mainly to the cavalry, in the provinces of Kharkov (with the center at Chuguev), Kherson (east of the Bug River, with the center at Elizavetgrad), and Ekaterinoslav.

Upon arrival at the area set aside for them, the troops would raze the existing villages and proceed to build permanent roads, homes, and public buildings for the entire regiment. This task often took more than one season, to the great discomfort of the soldier-peasants, who then had to spend the winter in the open fields for lack of houses. It soon proved more efficient to have the basic construction work performed by separate labor battalions composed of skilled workers and landless peasants.

Once the roads and buildings were completed, the new population of the villages was divided into five categories. The first category, the youngest elements, named "cantonists," i.e., the children of the soldiers and of the peasants, were subdivided into three age groups: under seven years, from seven to twelve, and from twelve to eighteen. The two older groups of children were put into uniforms and sent to special schools to be trained in the art of war. They were subject to army discipline and remained under military, rather than parental, authority. Upon completion of the eighteenth year, the cantonists either passed into the second category, that of "reservists," from which the active units drew their recruits, or, through family connections or inheritance, joined the ranks of the settled soldiers, the third category, as property-owners. The active soldiers made up the fourth category. The veterans and invalids comprised the fifth and last category. They were freed from all work and received housing and clothing from the government.

Alexander himself stood at the top of the entire organization, with Arakcheev as his lieutenant; but, because foreign affairs and the constant travel abroad which they entailed occupied more and more of the tsar's time, power of the settlements gradually passed almost entirely into Arakcheev's hands. In his work Arakcheev was aided by a general staff and by various committees, which increased in number as administrative problems became more complex. Among such special organizations were the Military Commission for Educational Assistance, created in 1817, the Main Economic Committee, and the Staff and Council of the Separate Corps of the Military Colonies, established in 1819 and 1821 respectively, to control finances and devise laws. Each regiment was in turn admin-

istered by its own committee, composed of the regimental commander, a chaplain, the company commanders, and two junior officers. It was responsible to the Main Economic Committee. The lowest administrative unit was the company, centered around its own committee, the chief function of which was to serve, at its weekly meetings, as a sounding board for the complaints of the soldiers. It consisted of a noncommissioned officer and, remarkably enough, three deputies elected by the troops themselves—a significant, if not very successful, attempt to introduce the representative system into the villages.

Each battalion took over an area comprising several villages and inhabited by some three thousand peasants. All houses were well constructed according to master-plans designed by specially selected architects, furnished with every necessity, and symmetrically arranged along the main road. In the center of the village, on a large square, stood a chapel and a fire station, the latter equipped with horses and staffed at all times by fire-fighting personnel, a very unusual institution in eastern Europe at that time. Around the square were erected quarters for commissioned and noncommissioned officers, a school for the cantonists, office building, and a drill-hall. Settlements where battalion or regimental headquarters were located contained, in addition, a hospital, a restaurant for officers, and sometimes even a library and a poolroom.

At the time of Alexander's death the military colonies consisted of 90 battalions of infantry in the Novgorod province, 12 in Mogilev, and 36 in the Ukraine, while 240 squadrons of cavalry were scattered throughout the three southern provinces, representing a total of over 750,000 men, women, and children.[5]

The aim was to make the military colonies completely self-containing and independent. And, indeed, with their own administration and a self-sufficient economy, they soon became a state within a state.

The inhabitants of the settlements came to form a new class of citizens, whose only connection with the remainder of Russia was through the person of the monarch. All "outsiders" were expelled, regardless of their social standing. Nobles whose estates happened to lie within an area set aside for the project were recompensed for their property and granted land somewhere else (among the dispossessed was Count M. M. Speranskii, the great Russian jurist). Merchants and other persons of the lower estates usually received only a fraction of its value for the property they had to leave behind. The ban included retired army officers. On the other hand, officers picked by Arakcheev to serve under him in the colonies were not permitted under any circumstances to transfer to another branch of the service, even after their retirement.[6]

Not subject to outside interference, the settlements had their own complete code of laws, incorporated into twenty-four volumes, which

was enforced by local courts. An attempt was made to assure the peasant-soldier of a fair trial by including in the jury of seven men three of his peers, elected by the colonists themselves.[7]

The settlements depended at first on government subsidies but soon became financially independent and disposed of considerable capital. To put the project on its feet, Alexander assigned a considerable portion of the current taxes for the purpose; and when that proved insufficent he ordered the ministry of finance to send to Arakcheev a sum equivalent to the expenditure of supporting an equal number of regular army men. In the long run Alexander's enterprise proved expensive to the government. No careful estimate of the cost of the military colonies has been made, nor is one possible on the basis of the available information. Estimates range from 13 to 100 million rubles, but the latter figure is certainly exaggerated, for it includes the value of the lands donated by the crown, although the lands actually never left the crown's possession and reverted to it when the colonies were finally abolished.

Nor was this money irretrievably lost to the treasury. For Arakcheev, in what amounts to a transfer of money from one pocket to another, assiduously built up a special capital, knowing that the tsar, who was eager to prove the soundness of the project, would be pleased. By taxing the settlers heavily, inflicting indiscriminate fines, selling liquor licenses, and other equally unsavory means, Arakcheev could boast by 1826 of a capital amounting to nearly 32 million rubles, which was partly invested and partly used for the immediate needs of the colonies.

Such were the origin and mechanics of the new institutions. To understand the chief reason for the great financial outlay and the tremendous effort which they caused, it is necessary to study more closely the vast project of socioeconomic and cultural reforms which was carried on within the colonies. Some of them were inherent in the very nature of the undertaking. But much of what was accomplished in the way of social, economic, and cultural progress went far beyond the immediate needs of the military colonies, as a realization of a deliberate effort on the part of Alexander and his aides to make the settlements spearheads of civilization in some of the more backward areas of Russia. Those measures gain added importance in view of the fact that the project, had it been completed according to the tsar's wishes, would have embraced four-fifths of the crown peasants and one million soldiers, nearly five million men, or between one-fourth and one-third of Russia's entire male population.[8] What effect such a force would have had on the future of Russian history can only be conjectured.

Every village designated for militarization underwent a process of social leveling in order that the wealth of the peasantry might be equalized and pauperism eliminated. The first of these two objectives

was accomplished through a complete revision of the existing property relationships. It was determined that a settler located in the Novgorod area needed approximately six dessiatins (about sixteen acres) and in the south fifteen dessiatins (about forty acres) of land to support himself, his family, and his military charges. All land was therefore redivided so as to provide everyone with the minimum or a greater amount when his family was larger than average. If the available land was insufficient, more was obtained by clearing woods and draining marshes. In addition to the soil, settlers also received from the government all necessary agricultural implements, cattle, and furniture, in conformity with a table of requirements drawn up in 1819, in order that, as it was officially stated, "even the poorest of them . . . have an equal opportunity to improve his lot and to prosper in the calling of a military colonist."[9] A part of the settler's pay was withheld and placed in a special bank, from which he could borrow money for repairs, improvements, and trade.

Pauperism was totally eliminated from the villages. Landless peasants, vagrants, and other people without tangible possessions or domicile were either drafted into the units as common soldiers or, more frequently, put into labor battalions. Those among them too old to work were put into the so-called "invalid houses," where they spent the rest of their lives at government expense.

The absence of a large number of free peasants in Russia, where the vast majority of peasants were serfs who worked on the land which belonged either to the nobility, the crown, or the church and were poor and barely civilized, was beginning to cause grave consternation among farsighted people of the time. The notion that Russia's problem was fundamentally an agricultural one and that no progress was possible until the Russian peasantry was raised from its wretched condition was becoming current, but a radical solution of the peasant question could not be realized for various reasons, not the least of which was the tsar's dependence on the nobility, which derived its livelihood from the oppressed peasantry. In view of this, Alexander's attempt to create in the settlements a class of property-owning peasants assumes special significance.

The basis of this endeavor was legislation which provided that the settlers could retain as their property all that the government donated to the colonies. This was guaranteed to them by a specific clause in the set of rules designed for the settlements in 1815 by Arakcheev. If carried out, this measure would have had far-reaching consequences, for the property which the government lavished on the settlers was generous and valuable. It would have resulted in the emergence of a new and fairly numerous class of peasant-proprietors. But a curious inability on

the part of Arakcheev and his helpers to understand the meaning of private property made this attempt meaningless. The same clause in the statute which granted the settler the cattle, buildings, and implements made him "responsible to his superiors for the property and for the order and good condition of the buildings, to prove his solicitude for his interests."[10] Similarly when a peasant drew a loan from the settlement bank, not only he but the whole village was responsible for its repayment, a regulation explained by desire to "make the soldiers pay close attention to each other's diligence in the performance of work."[11] As a result of such an interpretation, officers could deprive the settler of his "property" if they felt that he did not merit it, and the peasant could not dispose of it as he saw fit. Hence the prospect of creating a property-owning peasant class was doomed to failure from the very start.

Alexander spared no expense in providing the settlements with the best materials. They were provided with specially selected cattle and studhorses purchased from good native estates or imported from England and Denmark. The settlers were urged to mate their own animals with them in order to improve their breeds, and for that reason a certain number of studs were kept in the infantry regiments as well. Equally valuable was the agricultural equipment donated by the government.

Every attempt was made to make the military colonies self-supporting, notwithstanding almost insurmountable difficulties due to Russia's technological backwardness which it was necessary to overcome. In the first place, skilled workers and craftsmen, who were virtually unavailable, had to be trained. The erection of the first settlements was halted by the lack of personnel with the knowledge of brickmaking, and men with higher skills were even more difficult to find. They had to be recruited from the entire country to get the project started. In the meantime the soldiers and their children were slowly and painfully trained in various trades. Some were sent into apprenticeship in towns outside the settlements. Finally, within three or four years the settlements could boast of craftsmen capable of performing all work connected with construction and maintenance: locksmiths, carpenters, upholsterers, wheelwrights, even engravers and watchmakers, as well as bakers, shoemakers, and tailors. By then, in some settlements almost all tools and instruments were produced by local labor.[12]

Equally successful was the endeavor to attain self-sufficiency in matters of raw materials, industrial establishments, and transportation. To secure proper stone and lumber for construction, trained men were dispatched on expeditions to discover new sources of those materials, which were then donated by Alexander to the military colonies. After several years of such efforts, all building materials save granite, which was imported from Finland, were of local origin or manufacture.[13] Their quality and

the soundness of the building technique are attested by the structures themselves, which remained standing in excellent condition for over a century. The materials were worked in military colony steam sawmills and were transported on a river fleet of three steamships and thirty other vessels stationed at a port erected by Arakcheev on Lake Ilmen. The personnel who worked in the quarries, mills, and ships, who built roads and cleared woods, belonged to special construction brigades and numbered at times as many as thirty thousand men in the Novgorod area alone.

In so far as it is possible to judge on the basis of insufficient data, the military colonies, on the whole, seem to have attained economic success, especially in the south, where the management was generally the more efficient. Thus for example, fifteen years after they were founded, the Kherson colonies had more than doubled their original agricultural production.[14] Much was accomplished by raising agricultural techniques. Between 1815 and 1825 the yield of rye per acre in the Novgorod settlements increased 30 per cent, and the oats harvested in the Staraia Russa settlements achieved premium value at the St. Petersburg exchange.[15] The southern colonies were reported by contemporary journals to possess a large disposable surplus of produce.

Finally, hand in hand with the creation of an administrative machine and the introduction of a new social and economic order, an ambitious educational and cultural program was undertaken. A primary school was erected in each settlement and had to be attended by all children between the ages of seven and twelve as well as by adult illiterates. The curriculum of these schools consisted of elementary courses in the Russian language, arithmetic, geometry, drawing, religion, and physical exercises and military drill. A great handicap in expanding the schooling system was the lack of qualified teachers, and to remedy it the Bell-Lancaster monitorial method, only recently introduced into Russia, was adopted.[16] In 1818 a special teacher's institute was founded in St. Petersburg to prepare personnel for the schools of the colonies.[17] Arakcheev desired to train his own architects and engineers and used for this purpose young cantonists. Once, when two such candidates were refused admission to the St. Petersburg Academy of Art as insufficiently prepared, he hired them a private tutor; but this expensive practice was rarely followed.[18] A revolutionary step for the times was taken when, despite the protests of the settlers and their wives, schools for girls were established in the villages. Like the remainder of the educational institutions, they were supervised by a Military Commission for Educational Assistance, which chose textbooks, teaching methods, and curriculums.

The success of educational activities is generally difficult to gauge, and even more so when there is no basis for making comparisons. We are left to rely on casual remarks of contemporaries in judging the value of the schools in the military colonies. On the whole, those remarks are favorable and indicate that much was accomplished. A. Ia. Storozhenko, a high-ranking officer in the southern colonies and an outspoken critic of the entire project, wrote, with disapproval which stemmed from his skepticism concerning the value of popular education in general, that the students of the cantonist school in the Elizavetgrad settlement "not only knew all the poems, and especially tales, of our native writers, but could compete with any cadet corps in mathematical proficiency."[19] St. Petersburg rumors, usually unsympathetic to the project, had it that all cantonists could speak French and German fluently.[20] "The education of the soldier's children," wrote a French observer at the time, "which is intimately connected with the whole undertaking [of the military colonies], indicates well enough that he [Alexander I] wishes to advance the progress of civilization and to create for himself an intermediate class, the need of which makes itself felt in Russia more strongly with each day."[21]

In addition to studying, exercising, and drilling, older cantonists were expected to learn handicrafts and to participate in various cultural activities. The products of their hands were to be sold on the free market and the profits turned over to the settlement funds. A weekly paper, *The weekly leaf of the military colonies,* was started in 1823 in the regiment of Count Arakcheev to propagate the idea of the colonies. Local talent was used exclusively, cantonists supplying articles on metaphysical subjects (e.g., "Does God think about the world?"), translations of Latin classics, poems, etc. This periodical expired after the sixth issue.[22] An art school and a lithographic press, the latter a novelty in Russia, were established in one of the northern settlements and produced a portfolio, *Vidy sela Gruzina* [Views of the village Gruzino], with several correct, if uninspired, views of the prototype of the settlements.

Hand in hand with those efforts went hygienic measures. Every settlement area was provided with a hospital and with itinerant doctors, who made daily tours of all the villages, inspecting ailing settlers.[23] Maternity wards, fully equipped and staffed with midwives, bathhouses for each company, and English latrines placed in every house were a few of the measures which, it was hoped, would eliminate some of the most prevalent causes of disease and death in the rural areas.

The results of such unprecedented efforts on the part of the government to raise the standards and culture of the population were, on the surface, gratifying and impressed favorably even those who were, on principle, opposed to the project. Among the latter was the historian N. M.

Karamzin, who visited a settlement at the invitation of the tsar and admitted: "The colonies are remarkable in many respects. There, where eight years ago stood impassable marshes, you see orchards and towns."[24] Most enthusiastic were foreign diplomats and tourists, who read about those curious institutions in the Western press. Marmont, whose long and beneficent administration of Dalmatia under Napoleon makes his opinion on the subject somewhat authoritative, inspected the southern colonies in 1834 and reported that when he arrived at the gates of a military colony it seemed to him he was entering a terrestrial paradise. "In no other country," he added, "can one find an appearance of material well-being superior to that of the peasants of the colonies, although their poverty was extreme twenty years ago."[25] Another French eyewitness concluded his report on the northern settlements: "More than a century of civilization separates a settled village from the sad abodes of the Russian peasantry."[26]

Instances of such favorable reports could be multiplied. The general reaction of visitors was one of amazement and acute consciousness of the tremendous difference between the level of civilization of the settlements and the remainder of the Russian countryside. It led many to the same conclusion as that with which the secretary of the French embassy in Moscow summarized his report to his superiors in Paris in 1821: "In fine, it is a purely philanthropic idea which led the emperor to adopt this project."[27]

These reports recall Alexander's impression of Gruzino, and they suffer, as events have shown, from the same superficiality. In 1825 the peasants on Arakcheev's estate, which had evoked such enthusiasm in Alexander and foreign tourists for its "good management," revolted and murdered Arakcheev's mistress. Several earlier small uprisings were followed in 1831 by a bitter and bloody revolt which shook the northern colonies. In both cases the reaction of the peasants who were to be the chief benefactors of this "good management" belied the impression which they made on casual visitors. And thus, although there can be little doubt that the settlements were inspired by the best of intentions and that in some respects much had been achieved in them, there can be equally little doubt that essentially they were a profound failure.

The basic failure of the military settlements was their unrealistic character. They suffered from the weakness of all radical reforms founded on hopes and desires rather than on realities. In this sense their failure was similar to that of the other utopian undertakings of contemporary Europe: the Icarias, the colonies of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. But, in addition, Alexander's utopia had against it the great disadvantage of being imposed from above rather than being voluntarily initiated from below and of being imposed on a people least prepared to participate

in it. Thus the very character of the undertaking and the peculiar environment in which it was to be realized invalidated the good intentions and the purely material skill with which it was accomplished and doomed the project from the start.

In order to succeed, the project had, above all, to take into account the psychology and civic training of the personnel which executed it and for whose benefit it was designed. It required both that the officers to whose care it was intrusted possess the necessary qualifications and enthusiasm and that the peasantry understand its purpose and be fit to take part in the vast project of reforms. It was also necessary to enlist the support of the leading classes of society. As a matter of fact, none of those conditions was or could have been met.

Who were the executors of Alexander's vision? At the top of the organization stood Arakcheev, a man whose main claims to high office were his undivided loyalty to the tsar and an iron hand but who was devoid of the most elementary qualities of humaneness and tact. Under him served a bevy of artillery officers, generally men of low character and intelligence, who were torn away from the easy lives they had led in peacetime and were forced to serve against their will in an exacting undertaking in which they had not the least interest. With such personnel the goal of the project could not be realized, and it is surprising that it progressed as well as it did. This defect was not an intentional one, for in contemporary Russia it was impossible to find in the army a sufficiently large number of officers capable of shouldering the great responsibilities which the project required: men who could act as leaders of troops and, at the same time, perform the tasks of agricultural advisers, construction engineers, judges, accountants, and paragons of culture and learning.

A few examples may suffice to demonstrate to what extent the low quality of the officer personnel hampered, and in many cases made a tragic comedy of, the realization of Alexander's ideals. A great deal depended on the honesty and ability of the officers to whom large amounts of money and materials were entrusted. But the temptation to steal was great and the opportunities frequent, and as a result corruption flourished. An investigation of two settlements in 1821 revealed that large quantities of bread were stolen from the community magazines and that many settlers never received the livestock purchased for them by the government. Other investigations revealed that many high officers acquired sizable fortunes, having embezzled sums running into hundreds of thousands of rubles.[28] Petty thefts were a daily occurrence: instead of turning over the products of the cantonists to the colonies, many of the officers sold them outside and appropriated the proceeds; some exaggerated the sick lists to pocket the special allowance given to regiments

for hospitalization; others speculated with supplies or refused to deliver them to the lower echelons without a bribe.

These officers were even less qualified to act as civilizers and westernizers. Raised in the strict Prussian military tradition, they conceived their cultural tasks in terms of cleanliness, orderliness, and discipline. Schools were numerous and important, but this did not prevent Arakcheev from publicly scolding and ridiculing the settlement teachers when they failed to salute him properly. The clean hospitals, with their rich furniture and spotless floors, impressed visitors as a sign of advances in culture, as they could have been, had it not been for the fact that settlers were afraid to touch the furniture and, in order not to dirty the floors, used the windows as exits.

Public opinion was hostile to the project from the very beginning. High army officers saw in it a dangerous move which eventually would deprive them of control over the military forces and pass it on to Arakcheev, whom they detested and feared. Barclay de Tolly, when asked for this opinion by Alexander, replied frankly that he considered military and agricultural life to be incompatible; and many officers attacked the project on the grounds that it lowered the fighting qualities of Russian troops, since a soldier "burdened" with a family and property would not very willingly risk his life on the battlefield.[29]

The nobility disliked and feared certain political and economic connotations of the project. It was mystified by the secrecy with which the undertaking was realized and worried lest its power be weakened. The elimination of the draft would have freed the government from dependence on the good will of the landowners. More serious yet was the fear for the integrity of the state. The military colonies offered an opportunity for an ambitious adventurer to overthrow the government with millions of trained and armed peasants. This possibility was often called to the attention of the tsar, and was expressed by N. M. Longinov, who wrote in 1820: "[The military colonists] are the new *strel'tsy* who, in time, will lead Russia to a revolution. . . . It is in the order of things that sooner or later Russia will not escape a revolution, since all of Europe went through it. Here the conflagration will start in those renowned military colonies."[30] In addition, the landowners feared that the efficient and government-supported colonies would squeeze them out of the agricultural markets. One such landowner charged that the settlements sold their sheep and oats at the Odessa market to the detriment of the local nobility. A thousand individual small landowners, he complained, could not survive competition with a "dozen large monopolies."[31] Neither did the noblemen cherish the prospect of being expelled from their estates, should they happen to lie in the path of the spreading colonies.

There was little in the idea to commend itself to the intellectuals, who hoped for far-reaching political and social reforms. At first they received the news of the project warmly, hoping that it would lead to the abolition of serfdom in Russia.[32] As soon, however, as it became obvious that those expectations were groundless, the liberals turned violently against the project, and its abolition figured prominently among the demands of the Decembrists, some of whom hoped to start the coup in the military colonies.[33] Much of the one-sided interpretation which the military colonies received in Russian historical literature is due to the attitude of the liberal, intellectual circles, which viewed the undertaking, understandably enough, as a subterfuge on the part of the tsar.

But the fundamental reason for the lack of success of Alexander's ambitions lay deeper. The entire plan was conceived hastily, on the basis of superficial observations of one outwardly well-run estate and of abstract speculations concerning the needs of the peasantry. Educational reforms, the introduction of modern agricultural methods, of hygiene, of efficiency—all those measures, while good in themselves, could not be realized without consideration of the background and training of the peasantry. And yet this was never done. The project could never have fully succeeded, since it ignored the human element, no matter how impressive the purely material achievements might have been.

The military colonies were a planned, rational society and as such demanded a willing and intelligent submission to discipline. Participants in such an undertaking must know how to obey instinctively an elaborate set of laws and rules, how to fulfil willingly orders which disagree with their judgment. Furthermore, the incentives offered to the participant should have met their own desires. Viewed from this angle, the Russian peasant was the last person on earth to serve as the human material for such a project.

The type of discipline which Alexander and Arakcheev demanded was completely alien to the peasantry, who were used to life in tightly knit communities, run along traditional lines and the common sense of its members. The clock, the minute regulations with which any industrial or planned society is run and to which the average citizen of such societies is taught to conform from infancy, appeared to the peasant as the grossest form of oppression and cruelty. This was even more true in view of the fact that the peasants incorporated into the settlements were, for the most part, the freest and traditionally least disciplined elements in Russia: crown serfs, religious dissenters, and various alien seminomadic groups, among them Cossacks. The tragedy of the situation was the forced inclusion of people who, as sociologists would say, were used to living in a community (*Gemeinschaft*), in a planned society

(*Gesellschaft*), to be accomplished at once without allowing for the necessary gradual transition.

The problem of incentives is a serious one in a planned society, which must offer people a desirable goal toward which to concentrate their efforts. It is important to stress the word "desirable," for an incentive loses its purpose if it offers something which its object does not want or value. Now to the peasant the main incentive in all his endeavors, the ultimate reward for his labors, is the prospect of leisure. Enrichment, honors, luxuries, which are common incentives in advanced industrial societies, have little meaning for him. And yet this is what the project had to offer. The prospect of working at back-breaking tasks day after day in order to receive, in return, education or more property, and to feel pride in being a military colonist, or to have English latrines and clean hospitals simply made no sense. Eyewitnesses report that what the peasants resented most in the settlements was the lack of opportunity to rest and relax after a day's hard work and that they often stated their willingness to bear the greatest sacrifices for the government if only they were left alone.

Here, it seems, lies the root of the oft-repeated, but unsubstantiated, stories of severity and overwork which allegedly prevailed in the military colonies. As a matter of fact, the punishments for various crimes and misdemeanors were no more severe in the settlements than those that the soldier or peasant had to suffer elsewhere in Russia at the time, nor did the settlers have to work harder or longer than on the average private estate. But undoubtedly the peasants felt the settlements to be more severe and exacting. The severity they now experienced was not the sporadic cruelty of a landlord but the more persistent and penetrating severity of discipline and efficiency, and the reward which they received was meaningless to them.

It is understandable, therefore, why the atmosphere which prevailed in the military colonies was one of suspicion and dull routine, for which the purely material achievements could not compensate. The younger generation which grew up in them accounted for virtually all the successes which the project claimed, since the older generation never became reconciled to it and bore the duties with bitter resentment. Fundamentally, this attitude was caused by the very incompatibility between a quite primitive peasantry, used to hardships but not to discipline, and a project of a rigidly planned society, which satisfied the peasant's physical wants but deprived them of the freedom and leisure which they took for granted.

When, in 1831, the cholera epidemic which was then spreading over the Russian Empire reached the northern military colonies, it precipitated a bloody revolt there, in which the accumulated grievances and frustrations

of the peasant-soldiers found a violent outlet. In the belief that the deadly epidemic was caused by the precautionary medical and hygienic measures undertaken by the military colony authorities, the settlers murdered indiscriminately their officers and doctors and set fire to the villages and hospitals. They indulged in drinking orgies, they celebrated and roamed at will through the fields—they did, in other words, everything which they were not permitted to do by the authorities.[34] It was as if a dam had burst and the great vital forces, kept in check for many years, had broken through.

Then, as heads became clearer and emotions calmer, the settlers dispatched a delegation to Tsar Nicholas to assure him of their loyalty. Nicholas, however, was not to be mollified by such a naïve gesture. The rebellion caught him by surprise, for it occurred six years after he had dismissed the generally detested Arakcheev from his post as commander of the military colonies. It convinced him that the colonies, which heretofore he had had every intention of retaining, were too dangerous and that the dissatisfaction in them had deeper reasons than he had supposed.[35] He undertook, as a result, a series of far-reaching changes, which, for all practical purposes, did away with the military colonies.

Thus ended Alexander's lofty vision, ignominiously and bathed in blood. In the Russia of that time it could not succeed, nor could its failure be regretted. It collapsed because it was utopian and becaue it was forcefully imposed on a people unable and unwilling to participate. Its innovations never took root, and the attempt to enforce them left nothing but bitter memories.

NOTES

1. There is no evidence to support Shilder's contention that Alexander derived the idea of the military colonies from Joseph Servan's *Sur les frontières militaires de états* (N. K. Shilder, *Imperator Aleksandr Pervyi*, Vol. IV, St. Petersburg, 1905, p. 23), a book which is not listed under Servan's name in any of the standard biographical or bibliographic works. Servan, who served as French minister of war in 1792, wrote *Le soldat citoyen* (Paris, 1780) in which he propounded similar ideas, but there is no reference to it in the primary sources dealing with the project, nor is there any evidence of the tsar's having consulted it. For other suggestions concerning the origin of the idea see P. P. Evstafev, *Vosstanie voennykh poselian Novgorodskoi gubernii v 1831 g.* (Moscow, 1934), pp. 28–33.

2. A. Iazykov, "Iz vospominanii o sele Gruzine," *Russkii arkhiv*, Vol. VII (1969), pp. 1473–74.

3. Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailowitch, ed., *Correspondance de l'empereur Alexandre Ier avec sa soeur, la grande-duchesse Catherine* (St. Petersburg, 1910), pp. 32–33.

4. Cf. M. I. Bogdanovich, *Istoria tsarstvovaniia Aleksandra I* (St. Petersburg, 1871), Vol. V, pp. 352–53.

5. A. N. Petrov, "Ustroistvo i upravleniie voennykh poselenii v Rossii," in *Graf. Arakcheev i voennye poseleniia, 1809–1831* (St. Petersburg, 1871), pp. 178–79; and V. V. Shchepetilnikov, ed., *Stoletie voennago ministerstva* (St. Petersburg, 1902), Vol. IV, Part I, Books I/II, p. 114.

6. I. I. Sviiazev. "Vospominaniia," *Russkaia starina*, Vol. IV (1871), p. 560.

7. A. F. L. V. Marmont, *Voyage de M. le maréchal duc de Raguse*, Vol. I (Brussels, 1841), pp. 148–72.

8. Calculated at 18,000,000 in 1811, according to Herman, quoted in A. Kornilov, *Modern Russian History*, Vol. II (New York, 1943), p. 125.

9. Petrov, "Ustroistvo i upravleniie," p. 154.

10. A. A. Arakcheev, "Polozhenie o poselennykh voiskakh," *Russkii vestnik*, Vol. CCVII, Part 4 (1890), p. 237.

11. Petrov, "Ustroistvo i upravleniie," p. 137.

12. A. A. Eiler, "Zapiski," *Russkii arkhiv*, Vol. XVIII, Part 2 (1880), p. 377.

13. P. P. Kartsov, "O voennykh poseleniiakh pri Grafe Arakcheeve," *Russkii vestnik*, Vol. CCVI, Part 2 (1890), p. 153.

14. Marmont, *Voyage*, p. 168.

15. Kartsov, "O voennykh poseleniiakh," pp. 160–61.

16. Petrov, "Ustroistvo i upravleniie," p. 114; cf. N. G., "Pervaia v Rossii Lankasterskaia shkola," *Istoricheskii vestnik*, Vol. XXIX (1887), pp. 650–56.

17. Kartsov, "O voennykh poseleniiakh," Part 3, p. 99.

18. Petrov, "Ustroistvo i upravleniie," p. 115.

19. A. Ia. Storozhenko, "Iz zapisok," *Kievskaia starina*, Vol. X (1884), p. 455.

20. N. M. Longinov, "Iz pisem k Grafu S. R. Vorontsovu," *Russkii arkhiv*, Vol. L (1912), p. 405.

21. "Russie—colonies militaires," *Spectateur militaire*, Vol. V (1828), p. 242.

22. V. Anderson, "Graf Arakcheev i ego izdaniia," *Russkii bibliofil*, no. 4 (1911), pp. 13–14.

23. N. F. Dubrovin, ed., *Sbornik istoricheskikh materialov izvlechennykh iz arkhiva sobstvennoi E.I.V. kantselarii*, Vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1882), p. 58.

24. *Pisma N. M. Karamzina k I. I. Dmitrievu*, eds. Ia. Grot and P. Pekarskii (St. Petersburg, 1866), p. 400.

25. Marmont, *Voyage*, p. 178.

26. "Des colonies militaires," *Spectateur militaire*, Vol. IX (1830), p. 471.

27. Archives des Affaires étrangères, Paris, Mémoires et documents, Vol. XXVIII, quoted by P. Rain, *Alexandre 1er* (Paris, 1913), p. 359.

28. Cf., e.g., Storozhenko, "Iz zapisok," p. 448.

29. *Stoletie voennago ministerstva*, Vol. IV, Part 1, Appendix (Prilozhenie), p. 14.

30. Longinov, "Iz pisem," p. 364.

31. Storozhenko, "Iz zapisok," pp. 475–76.

32. Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich, *Le tsar Alexandre I* (Paris, 1931), p. 243.

33. V. I. Semevskii, *Politicheskie i obshchestvennye idei Dekabristov* (St. Petersburg, 1909), pp. 167–78.

34. I. I. Evropeus, "Vospominaniia," *Russkaia starina,* Vol. VI (1872), pp. 547–58.

35. N. Shilder, "Imperator Nikolai i Graf Arakcheev," *Istoricheskii vestnik,* Vol. LXXX (1900), pp. 449–71.

CHAPTER 5

Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry

It has been said of so-called old English traditions that on closer scrutiny they usually turn out to date back no further than Queen Victoria. *Mutatis mutandis,* the same observation can be made about the terminology and concepts of modern Russian history. Closer investigation reveals that in a surprising number of instances they are the product of political polemics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and especially those involving the Marxists. They are not only neologisms, as historical terms and concepts often are, but neologisms devised for specific political purposes and never subjected by historians to critical appraisal. As an example we may point to the concept "Legal Marxism," which was coined around 1900 by the "orthodox" Russian Social Democrats for the "revisionists" and subsequently applied retroactively to the preceding decade.[1] Another example is the term *obshchestvennoe dvizhenie* as a label for the whole spectrum of political self-expression of Russian society from the Free Mason Novikov to Lenin inclusively. The looseness and imprecision with which these and similar terms are used is quite appalling, and would be difficult to duplicate in the historical literature of any other major European country.

Nowhere is the confusion greater than in the use of the term *narodnichestvo.* On the face of it, the meaning of this term is obvious: it describes an agrarian socialism of the second half of the nineteenth century, which upheld the proposition that Russia could by-pass the capitalist stage of development and proceed through the artel and peasant commune directly to socialism. Its inspiration came from Herzen and Chernyshevsky, and its strategy from Lavrov, Bakunin, and Tkachev. It first manifested itself overtly in the "going to the people" movement, and reached its zenith with the terror of the People's Will, after which

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it quickly lost ground to Marxism. This, as it were, classic conception of *narodnichestvo* constitutes, for example, the framework of the most recent and most extensive treatment of the subject, Professor Venturi's *Populismo russo,* originally published in 1952.

The matter, however, is more controversial than it may at first appear. There exists really very little agreement among the authorities not only on what actually constitutes *narodnichestvo* but also on what personalities and events come within its range. Professor Venturi devotes a whole long chapter to Bakunin as one of the creators of *narodnichestvo,* while Professor Berlin, in his introduction to Venturi's book, denies that Bakunin was a *narodnik,* although he concedes that Bakunin had influenced the movement.[2] Soviet historians deny that Herzen and Chernyshevsky were Populists, and prefer to call them instead "revolutionary democrats" (*revoliutsionnye demokraty*). Authorities such as Plekhanov and Kablits (Iuzov) denied that Lavrov and his followers could be regarded as Populists.[3] As for Tkachev, M. Pokrovsky once said that he was "undoubtedly the first Russian Marxist," and B. P. Kozmin, Tkachev's editor and biographer, repeatedly and emphatically denied that he belonged to the Populists.[4] Who then is there left? One cannot think of one leading figure of what is known as Populism who either did not himself deny or was not denied by others the appellation of *narodnik.* Much the same confusion prevails when we try to determine which episodes in revolutionary history can be properly described as Populist. Some authors include in this category the "going to the people movement"; others exclude it; some include the *Narodnaia volia,* while others do not.

All of this suggests that "Populism," like so many other terms employed by the historian of modern Russia, has long been due for a critical reappraisal. Perhaps the first step toward it is to determine what the term *narodniki* and *narodnichestvo* had meant in actual usage, how they originated and how they evolved.[5]

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the noun *narod* and its various derivatives, including the adjective *narodnyi,* were widely used in Russia as equivalents of the German "Volk" and its derivatives, such as *volkstümlich.* For instance, the Russian word for political economy—*narodnoe khoziaistvo*—was clearly a literal translation of *Volkswirtschaft,* as were many other compound words using the adjective "*narodnyi.*" *Narodnyi* often also served as a Russian equivalent of "democratic" or "populaire." A striking example of such adaptation is the word *narodopravstvo,* in the sense of "democracy," which Kostomarov used in his history of old Novgorod and Pskov.

It is in this broad sense that the adjective *narodnyi* was sometimes used by radicals of the 1860's and early 1870's. It meant to them "on the side of the people," "popular," or "democratic." As such, it was

used by the members of the so-called Chaikovskii circle (1869–72) when they spoke of their task being the formation of an *istinno-narodnaia,* that is, "truly-popular" or democratic party.[6] But neither they nor the students who in 1872–74 participated in the "going to the people" movement ever called themselves *narodniki.* They sometimes spoke of themselves as "propagandists" and "agitators" (depending on whether they subscribed to the doctrines of Lavrov or Bakunin), but usually they used the expression "socialist (or social) revolutionaries." It is in those terms that the defendants of the two great political trials of 1877—those of the "Fifty" and the "Hundred ninety-three"—referred to their groups.[7] In the émigré press of the time one sometimes also encounters the expression *narodnaia revoliutsiia* or *narodnaia partiia,* where the adjective *"narodnaia"* always has the sense of "democratic" and lacks specific political or social content.[8]

The word *narodnichestvo* seems to have entered the political vocabulary only in 1878, although the phenomenon to which it applied had come into existence three years earlier. It represented a specific phase in the history of the socialist-revolutionary movement: that between the first episode of "going to the people" in 1872–74 and the terrorism of 1878–81.

The "going to the people" movement of 1872–74 was an act of expiation on the part of the intellectual. Having emancipated himself from the tyranny of tradition and metaphysics, he had become aware of his responsibility to the "people," who through their toil made his emancipation possible. Whether he followed Lavrov and believed that the social revolution required many years of peaceful propaganda or, following Bakunin, assumed that the Russian peasant was already imbued with socialism and ready for revolution mattered little as far as his fundamental attitude was concerned: that it was the mission of intellectuals to stimulate socialist feelings in the village.

As is well known, this movement failed because the peasant proved equally unwilling to listen to socialist propaganda and to respond to socialist agitation. The radical youths discovered that the "people" possessed strongly rooted, indigenous social institutions, such as the commune, great respect for the monarchy, and equally great suspicion of the intellectuals. They concluded, therefore, that the methods of work among the people had to be revised. For one, they realized that the itinerant "propagandists" and "agitators," who had roamed the countryside in search of contacts, could have no success, and had to be replaced by regular settlers or colonists ready to take up residence among the people and live their life. In the second place, the idea of teaching socialism had to be abandoned. Instead of instructing the peasant, it was decided that the radical should learn from him, that is, acquaint

himself with peasant needs and attitudes. This strategy, derived from the lessons of 1872–74, was formulated by Mark Natanson and Alexander Mikhailov, who in 1876 organized the *Severnaia revoliutsionno-narodnicheskaia gruppa* (Northern Revolutionary-Populist Group), an organization which two years later came to be known as *Zemlia i volia.*[9] The characteristic feature of this group was the repudiation of the Lavrovite notion of socialist propaganda in favor of a Bakuninist identification with and subordination to the "people" as they actually were—but without either the Bakuninist assumptions about the revolutionary mood of the peasant or its socialist internationalism. Pressed to its extreme, this attitude could produce very curious results. The celebrated attempt of Stefanovich to incite to revolt the peasants of Chigirin in the name of a spurious imperial manifesto which called on them to rise against the landlords was carried out in the name of this new theory.

All the sources agree that *narodnichestvo* as a concept—though not yet as a definite political designation—came into being around 1875 and was applied to groups which in 1878 formed the *Zemlia i volia.* Mikhailov thus explained it in a police deposition of 1881: "The slogan of all Russian socialist-revolutionaries was usually worded: 'the achievement of a social-economic revolution for the people and through the people.' To these words the *narodniki* added: 'and in accord with its age-old and ardent wishes.'"[10] The concept of a revolution not only in the interests of the people and through their instrumentality but also in accord with their wishes was indeed the criterion of *narodnichestvo* in its original sense. Lev Tikhomirov in his memoirs describes as follows the "new idea" with which Natanson arrived in St. Petersburg in 1875:

> This new idea was *narodnichestvo.* Previously, we had been "propagandists" and "developed the people," grafting onto it "higher ideals." . . . Now it was decided that the Russian people already *has* the very ideas which the intelligentsia regards as the most advanced. . . . The people has nothing to learn and nothing to teach. All that is needed is to help the people organize its forces and to throw off the yoke of the government. . . .[11]

Similar was the explanation given by Zheliabov at his trial for the assassination of Alexander II. On this occasion he used the term *narodoliubtsy* ("demophiles") for the individual propagandists of the early 1870's, contrasting them with the *"narodniki"*:

> Having come to the conclusion that the difficulties which the government created made it impossible to imbue the conscience of the people entirely with socialism, *the socialists went over to the populists (sotsialisty pereshli k narodnikam).* . . . We decided to act in the name of the interests of which

> the people has already become aware—no longer in the name of pure doctrine, but on the basis of interests rooted in the life of the people, interests of which it was conscious. This was the characteristic quality of *narodnichestvo*. From dreams and metaphysics it made the transition to positivism, and came to adhere to the soil (*pochva*). This is the basic quality of *narodnichestvo*.[12]

The word *narodnichestvo* thus originally designated an anti-intellectual and even anti-socialist tendency within the socialist-revolutionary movement. Its adherents held that the intellectuals should not lead the people in the name of abstract, bookish, imported ideas but adapt themselves to the people as it was, promoting resistance to the government in the name of real, everyday needs. It was this attitude and not glorification of the commune or belief in Russia's "separate path" that characterized *narodnichestvo* when the term first came into use. *Narodnichestvo,* wrote Tikhomirov in 1883, "was never especially concerned with the question of *'autochthony'* (*samobytnost'*) of national development, but it always, unconditionally insisted on the *'autonomy'* (*samostoiatel'nost'*) of this development. . . . The common and indispensable foundation of *narodnichestvo* was undoubtedly democratism—not some special, Russian one, but the most ordinary, universal one, so to say."[13] In this original sense *narodnichestvo* represents a close historical parallel to the so-called "economist" tendency which emerged in Russian Social Democracy in the late 1890's. In both cases disillusionment with the indifference or outright hostility of the "masses" to socialism induced the radicals to formulate a new strategy calling for the abandonment of socialist propaganda in favor of organized agitation on the basis of actual needs and wants.[14]

In 1878 the word *narodnik* begins to make its appearance in print as a political label. It is not yet used in the programs of the groups which organized in 1876–77 on the platform outlined above.[15] But it does appear occasionally on the pages of the periodical *Zemlia i volia,* which was founded in the autumn of 1878. The announcement of the forthcoming publication of *Zemlia i volia* states that it will serve as an organ of *revoliutsionery-narodniki,* explaining that this refers to the principle that the people should be liberated through its own efforts and not from above.[16] What this meant concretely was explained by S. Kravchinsky (Stepniak) in the first issue of the journal:

> The revolution is the task of the masses. It is being prepared by history. The revolutionaries are quite powerless to change anything. They can serve only as the instruments of history, as agents of popular strivings. . . . For that reason every true revolutionary program ought to rest on

> popular ideals (*narodnye idealy*) as history has produced them at a given time and in a given place. At all times, in all places and under all conditions the rising Russian people has demanded land and freedom. . . . Such is without question also [the program] of the vast majority of the Russian people today. That is why we, revolutionary-populists (*revoliutsionery-narodniki*) accept it too.[17]

By the end of 1878, Paul Akselrod, writing in an émigré publication on the need of creating a single "popular party" (*narodnaia partiia*), complained that there were in Russia too many factions, listing them as *buntari, narodniki, propagandisty, obshchinniki.*[18] The *narodniki* were thus distinguished from both the Lavrovists and the Bakuninists as a separate group.

This new, *narodnik* strategy was scarcely three years old when widespread disappointment with its results caused it in turn to be subjected to a critical appraisal. Some of the *narodnik* colonists—*derevenshchiki* (villagers), as they were sometimes called—so identified themselves with the peasants and workers whose life they shared that they quite lost sight of the original revolutionary purpose of their settlement. Others felt impatient with the lack of outlets for their revolutionary energies. Stefanovich's subterfuge at Chigirin was the only successful insurrection initiated by the group, and even his success was achieved by very dubious tactics. The consequence of the disappointment was a shift toward political activity, which until then the socialist-revolutionaries of all factions had shunned.

Political action in its various forms—coup d'état, individual terror, cooperation with liberals, advocacy of constitutionalism—led to a split among the socialist-revolutionaries which naturally affected the usage of "*narodnichestvo.*" Until the spring of 1879 when the split became formal and *Zemlia i volia* broke in two, the label *narodniki* was applied exclusively to the *opponents* of political action. We possess interesting evidence to this effect from materials bearing on the conversion of Zheliabov to terrorism. Zheliabov was in 1878 against the terroristic methods which some members of *Zemlia i volia* began to advocate and even practice. When M. Frolenko, who had joined the terrorists, proposed to his associates to invite Zheliabov to the projected Lipetsk conference of the terrorist faction, they objected on the grounds that Zheliabov was "an out and out *narodnik.*"[19] Frolenko nevertheless persuaded Zheliabov to participate in a terroristic venture, but not before Zheliabov made certain that his acquiescence did not commit him to political action in general: "I am not going to give up *narodnichestvo* even though I have agreed to a single terroristic act," he told Frolenko.[20]

It was not long, however, before the word *narodniki* came to be applied indiscriminately to both the opponents and proponents of terror; indeed, sometimes it was even exclusively applied to the latter. The cause for this shift in meaning is to be found in the circumstances under which the *Zemlia i volia* fell apart. The terrorists had no intention of renouncing the principles of *narodnichestvo;* they merely wished to change its strategy, and even that only provisionally. In fact, all during the year 1878, terroristic acts were carried out in the name of *Zemlia i volia,* and the first literary organ of the terrorists called itself *Listok Zemli i voli.* But when a minority group within the party, led by Plekhanov, refused to condone terrorism, it was reluctantly agreed that the old name would have to be given up. The name which the terrorists adopted for their organization—People's Will—was clearly meant to stress continued adherence to the *narodnik* ideal.[21] In their program, drafted in 1879, the *Narodovol'tsy* called themselves "socialists and *narodniki,*" explaining that by "socialism" they meant acting in the *interests* of the people, and by *narodnichestvo* acting by *means* of the people.[22] In October, 1881, the journal *Narodnaia volia* indignantly denied that it had departed from *narodnichestvo*: "The foundations of the People's Will (*narodovol'chestvo*) were undoubtedly laid by Populism (*narodnichestvo*). . . . Populism gave the People's Will its political character [*sic!*] as well as its estimate of forces favorable and hostile to the people. Developing logically the principles of Populism, the People's Will creates not only a doctrine but a whole outlook."[23]

The attachment of the *Narodovol'tsy* to the principles of *narodnichestvo* is well brought out in one contemporary document, the "Declaration" which the terrorist S. Shiriaev prepared for the police in July, 1880, while under arrest. Explaining to the authorities the genesis of terrorism, Shiriaev used the term *narodnichestvo* in its original sense. Then he proceeded to discuss the debates which took place among the *narodniki* in 1878–79 over the old program:

> The discussion of the program revealed that whereas we were agreed on the foundations of *narodnik* views, we were in significant disagreement over the admissibility of political warfare. Some of us attached to this factor only a temporary and very qualified significance; others, believing that it was a great flaw of the *narodnik* program from the beginning to have ignored so important a question, thought that the Russian social-revolutionary party had been altogether excessively worried about succumbing to the purely political struggle at the expense of *narodnik* activity. But because the majority supported the former opinion, a resolution was accepted *to supplement the narodnik program* by temporarily acquiescing to the political struggle in order to ensure conditions under which it would

become possible to wage the ideological struggle in the name of pure social demands.[24]

By 1880 *narodniki* and *narodnichestvo* had lost their original precise meaning and came to be applied indiscriminately and often contradictorily. A few examples will suffice. Shiriaev, as a defendant at the trial of the so-called "Sixteen," held in October, 1880, referred to the Lipetsk conference of the terrorist faction of *Zemlia i volia* as a meeting of the "*narodnik* party."[25] P. Lavrov, writing in 1879 for a German yearbook, stated that the term *narodniki,* which previously had been used "by everybody who believed in the possibility of a social revolution carried out with the forces of the people itself," had become the monopoly of those who wanted to concentrate on the political struggle.[26] Yet at the same time *Chernyi peredel,* the organ of the antiterroristic revolutionaries, spoke of itself as the voice of "revolutionary *narodnichestvo,*" explaining that this name applied to "*any* party which places on its standard social revolution in the interests of and in accord with the views and ideals of the popular (*narodnye*) masses." As an illustration, it cited the Gracchi.[27] The terminological confusion was perhaps not as bewildering to contemporaries as it is to the historian, because the radicals rarely used the word *narodniki,* preferring to call themselves socialist-revolutionaries, a designation which covered both the terrorists and their opponents.

In 1880 the term *narodnichestvo* became current in the legal Russian literature thanks to essays published in *Russkoe bogatstvo* by the novelist N. Zlatovratskii. Zlatovratskii proudly accepted the title of *narodnik,* applying it to those who felt a sense of indebtedness to the people, believed in the communal principle, and wished to stimulate the masses to independent activity. But neither his essays nor those of his critics helped to lend precision to a term which in the early 1880's became quite popular.[28]

One of the first attempts to clear up the terminological confusion was undertaken by I. Kablits (Iuzov) in a series of articles published in 1880–81 in the journal *Nedelia,* which were later brought out in two volumes called *Foundations of Populism,* and in the book *Intelligentsia and the People in the Social Life of Russia.*[29] Kablits had once participated in the "going to the people" movement, and after the dissolution of *Zemlia i volia* had identified himself with the true "*narodnik,*" antiterrorist position of *Chernyi peredel.* Like most of his contemporaries he was distressed by the confusion surrounding the word *narodnichestvo.* "A man calls himself a *narodnik,*" he says, "and turns out to hold liberal views, or vice versa; very often the name is appropriated by conservatives and liberals."[30] He himself defines it in the original sense, that is, as a theory calling for the subordination of the intelligentsia to the people. Like

Zheliabov, Kablits draws a sharp distinction between "*narodoliubstvo*," which means ordinary "love of the people," and *narodnichestvo* proper, which rests on the premise that "the social life of the masses ought to be subordinated only to the 'opinion' [i.e., will] of the people itself."[31] Thus, while every *narodnik* is by definition also a *narodoliubets*, the reverse is not necessarily true. The main enemy of *narodnichestvo* is the intellectual who presumes to know what the people need. Such intellectuals—for example, Pisarev, Lavrov, and Mikhailovsky—are, in Kablits' terminology, exponents of "intellectual bureaucratism" (*intelligentskii biurokratizm*). They pretend to fight for the interests of the people, but in reality work for the interests of their own group, the intelligentsia. To this category belong the majority of the "friends of the people" or progressives of the 1860's and 1870's "who were merely representatives of 'demophilic' intellectual bureaucratism (*narodoliubimyi intelligentskii biurokratizm*) and not at all of the *narodniki*."[32] At one point Kablits asserts that genuine *narodnichestvo* has as its aim the protection of the people from usurpation of power by the intelligentsia.[33]

Although Kablits' usage was historically correct (if extreme), it did not catch on, partly because the phenomenon which had given rise to it was dead in the mid-1870's and partly because his attacks on the intelligentsia alienated many readers. *Narodnichestvo* continued in the early 1880's to be employed in a most bewildering variety of ways. For a while it even was applied to the extreme nationalists, serving as a Russian equivalent of "jingoism."[34] According to one publicist of the time, the truest representative of *narodnichestvo* was none other than Dostoevsky, because he alone accepted as an ideal the Russian people as it was, with its vices no less than its virtues.[35]

In 1884 the literary historian A. Pypin wrote a long essay called "Narodnichestvo," in which he confessed to being completely confused:

> "Narodnichestvo" which one hears so often mentioned these days is something extremely unclear, difficult to define, and arbitrary. "Narodniki" is used by and for people who have very little in common, and often bear no resemblance to each other: people with very progressive opinions, as well as people who, while they assert with every breath that they are special friends of the people, preach something very close to obscurantism.[36]

Pypin himself finally settled for a broad, cultural definition which embraced all those interested and concerned with the common people and their life. Within its purview came not only ethnographers, folklorists, and historians of language and popular culture, but also some Slavophile writers (e.g., K. Aksakov), and even Dostoevsky, Strakhov, and the young Tolstoy.[37] On one occasion, he named Ivan Pososhkov an early *narodnik*.[38]

Pypin subsequently published several articles on the subject in which he used this term more narrowly to describe a school of Russian literature characterized by concern with the realities of peasant life. As its outstanding representatives, he listed Gleb Uspensky and Zlatovratskii.[39] With time, *narodnichestvo* actually did enter the vocabulary of the literary historican as a designation of a particular peasant-oriented tendency in Russian postreform literature, and as such it is used to this day.[40]

As a political label, however, it gradually fell into disuse in the second half of the 1880's, no doubt because of its imprecision: a term which embraced terrorists and antiterrorists, Leo Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Strakhov and Gleb Uspensky simply could not be used. It appears rarely, therefore, in the voluminous literature on the Russian revolutionary movement published in Europe by Western and Russian authors. Ill-informed authors of that time usually referred to all Russian revolutionaries as "nihilists." Well-informed ones either did not refer to *narodnichestvo* at all, or employed this word correctly in the specific, narrow sense of the mid-1870's. Alphons Thun, the German economist who in 1883 published the first scholarly study of the Russian revolutionary movement to appear in any language, did not call the radicals of the 1860's and 1870's *narodniki*, but socialist-revolutionaries or simply socialists. On the two or three occasions when he did make use of *narodniki* he did so in the strict historic sense, applying the term to the group which in 1876 had come out in favor of continuous settlement among the people.[41] The same holds true of the writings of no less an authority than Stepniak-Kravchinskii. Kravchinskii had personally taken part in both the *Zemlia i volia* and the *Narodnaia volia*, and, having escaped the police, settled abroad where he published several firsthand accounts of the revolutionary movement. He also did not use the term *narodniki*. In his first book published in Europe, *La Rossia sotterranea*, he discusses the revolutionaries of the 1870's under the two rubrics of "propagandists" and "terrorists," without providing them with a common name.[42] In *Russian Storm Cloud*, protesting the misuse in the West of the word "nihilist," he says that the Russian revolutionaries themselves use two names: a formal one—"socialist revolutionaries"—and a colloquial one—"radicals."[43] And Lev Tikhomirov, in a French book published in 1886, explained that *narodnik* was a literal Russian translation of the word "democrat."[44]

The vague word *narodnik* may well have disappeared as a political designation were it not that the emergence in St. Petersburg around 1890 of a new movement, Social Democracy, led to violent controversy among radical publicists. In this controversy the words *narodnik* and *narodnichestvo* were once more made current, although in a sense quite different from the one they had had until then.

The immediate cause of this controversy was the great famine of 1891, which divided the socialist groups into two camps. On the one hand stood the established names in the "progressive" camp: Vorontsov ("V.V."), Danielson ("Nikolai-on"), Iuzhakov, Karyshev, and others, who maintained that the famine was an inevitable consequence of the depredations of post-1861 capitalism. In their opinion, capitalism in Russia lacked a natural environment and survived only thanks to government support. They advocated that instead of continuing this support, the government promote social and economic institutions which had proven their viability. In so doing, some of them, notably Danielson, freely used Marxist concepts and methods of analysis. This anticapitalist position was rejected by a group of "true" Marxists, or Social Democrats, led by Peter Struve (then a university student), who argued that capitalism in Russia was both "natural" and progressive. In their view, the famine was the consequence of a capitalism insufficiently developed, and in the long run was symptomatic of a healthy and maturing economy. In the debates which flared up between the two groups, first in private and then in public, the anticapitalistic socialists called their opponents "objectivists" or "economic determinists," while the Social Democrats labeled them in turn "subjectivists" or *narodniki.* In this new usage, which seems to have appeared around 1892 and to have established itself by 1894, *narodnichestvo* came to signify a concrete body of social and economic doctrine based on the proposition that Russia could by-pass capitalism.

Now it is quite clear that such usage had no historical justification. For all its ambiguity, *narodnichestvo* had always meant one thing: the belief that all social changes must derive from a popular mandate. It was a political attitude, devoid of specific programmatic content. The *narodniki* of the mid-1870's had supported the commune or artel not so much because Herzen or Chernyshevsky had done so, but because these were the institutions they actually encountered in the villages and therefore considered "popular." Similar considerations had inspired some *narodniki* to appeal even to the monarchist sentiments of the peasantry. If the Social Democrats nevertheless felt free to use the term in a new and different sense, it is because they were interested not in etymology but in the socio-economic basis of the ideology which opposed them. Decisive to them was not what a given group thought of itself or called itself but what it actually represented from the Marxist point of view.

This new, broad, and "objective" usage developed gradually. Plekhanov in his polemics of the early 1880's still used *narodnichestvo* in the precise historical sense. In *Socialism and the Political Struggle,* which he wrote in the summer of 1883, he identified *narodnichestvo* with *Zemlia i volia* and *Chernyi peredel,* as a theory which advocated that intellectuals work among the people and that the emancipation of the people be accom-

plished by the people itself. He also characterized the *Narodnaia volia* as a "complete and universal rejection of *narodnichestvo.*"[45] But in *Our Disagreements,* written a year later, he already displayed a tendency to broaden the definition, referring to *narodnichestvo* as a "peculiar theoretical amalgam" of Chernyshevskii and Slavophilism.[46] In 1888 he published a polemical essay against Lev Tikhomirov, who by then had defected from the revolutionary movement, in which he defined the term as follows: "Under socialist-populists (*sotsialisty-narodniki*) we understand all those socialists who hold that the peasant commune ought to constitute the main basis of the socialist revolution in Russia. In this sense the members of the *Narodnaia volia* must also be recognized as *narodniki.* They had done so themselves. In the program of th Executive Committee [of 1879] they called themselves straightforward *sotsialisty-narodniki.*"[47] This passage represents one of the earliest, if not the very first, applications of *narodnichestvo* in the broad, modern sense.

The revival of interest in *narodnichestvo* was due to a series of articles published by Vorontsov in 1892 in *Russkoe bogatstvo* under the title "Essays on the Foundations of *Narodnichestvo.*"[48] Vorontsov here used the word in its traditional, non-Marxist sense: "The interests of the people as the goal; forms worked out by the people's collective thought, or by others that correspond to its needs, as the means; and the self-reliance (*samodeiatel'nost'*) of the people as the lever of social evolution—such are the three principles characterizing modern *narodnichestvo* as it has emerged in the postreform era of our history."[49] Like Kablits before him, Vorontsov attacked the intelligentsia for its elitism and readiness to side with capitalism. In history, he said, the educated minority unfortunately always had managed to subordinate the uneducated majority. *Narodnichestvo* opposed this tendency. His articles gave new currency to a now rather forgotten word, and stimulated the republication of the second volume of Kablits' book.[50]

Danielson's main work, *Outlines of our Postreform Political Economy,* which appeared in 1893, was not at all intended as an expression of *narodnik* views, but nevertheless helped to add fuel to the debate over *narodnichestvo.* Unlike Vorontsov, Danielson did not consider himself a *narodnik* (in the traditional sense), but a Marxist. He not only maintained close personal relations with Marx and Engels, and translated all the volumes of *Capital* into Russian, but he attempted a bold application of Marxist methods of analysis and concepts to what today would be called an "underdeveloped economy." Like Vorontsov, he believed that capitalism had no future in Russia, although for very different reasons, derived not from the typical *narodnik* belief in the right of the people to mold its own destiny but from doubts whether Russian capitalism disposed of the requisite commercial markets. Danielson, it may be

added parenthetically, did not believe in the viability of the peasant commune.

Although Vorontsov's and Danielson's positions rested on very different premises, to the young Marxists they seemed fundamentally identical insofar as they agreed in denying the feasibility and the progressive character of Russian capitalism. For all these socialist opponents of capitalism they now (1893–94) began to use the term *narodniki.*

The creator of the new usage was Struve. A fanatical Westerner and equally fanatical Marxist (in the contemporary German Social Democratic sense), he interpreted the anticapitalist literature of the socialists as a continuation of old Slavophilism and a Russian equivalent of Western economic "romanticism" of the pre-Marxist era. To Struve, a socialist who denied the progressive character of capitalism was both a utopian and a Slavophile, whether he did so on ideal grounds, as did Vorontsov, or pragmatic ones, as did Danielson. By calling such publicists *narodniki,* Struve gave the term a new meaning. Whereas until then *narodnichestvo* had referred to a theory of the relationship of the intelligentsia to the people, under Struve's pen it came to refer to a theory of the economic development of Russia.

Struve introduced this usage in a review of Danielson's book which appeared in a German socialist review in October, 1893.[51] In it, he described the *narodniki* as the intellectual descendants of Herzen and Chernyshevskii, and called their theory a thoroughly utopian "idealization of the natural economy and communal ownership of the peasantry."[52] He elaborated this definition in his book *Critical Remarks on the Question of the Economic Development of Russia,* which served as the manifesto of the nascent Russian Social Democratic movement: "The theory of the autochthonous (*samobytnoe*) development of Russia, or simply the faith in such development, constitutes the essence of that movement whose representatives—for all their differences on certain individual (and sometimes very important) questions—can be combined under the common name of *narodnichestvo.*"[53] Aware that such broad usage was inexact, Struve drew a distinction between the "Westernizing" *narodniki,* among whom he included Chernyshevskii, Lavrov, and Mikhailovskii, and the "Slavophile" *narodniki,* represented by Kablits and Prugavin. The former believed in the ability of the intelligentsia to lead the people; the latter saw the relation between the intelligentsia and the people as one of conflict. Later in his exposition Struve added a third category of "*narodniki*-materialists," who believed that progress depended on economic forces. Among them he listed Vorontsov.[54] All these writers, Struve wrote,

> are distinguished, although in varying degrees, by their faith in the possibility of an "independent development" of Russia. This faith binds

> writers of the most diverse character, from Mr. Mikhailovskii to Mr. Iuzov [Kablits] in a single movement to which *we* attach the name of *narodnichestvo*. This faith constitutes the historical link between Slavophilism and *narodnichestvo;* in it lies the rejection of the very basis of Westernism. It is for this reason that we regard our quarrel with the *narodniki* a natural continuation of the disputes between the Slavophiles and the Westerners.[55]

Among the innovations which Struve made in the usage of *narodnichestvo* was to include in it Mikhailovskii. Mikhailovskii himself had denied being a *narodnik,* but, as far as Struve was concerned, without avail.[56] For early in 1894, Mikhailovskii had voiced doubts about the theory of economic determinism, and thereby in the eyes of the young Social Democrats had placed himself in the same category as Vorontsov and Danielson. "We know very well," Struve wrote, "that one of the principal representatives [of *narodnichestvo*], Mr. Mikhailovskii, does not acknowledge himself a *narodnik,* and quite rightly separates himself from V.V. [Vorontsov] and the other *narodniki par excellence.* Nevertheless, *in our meaning of the word,* he is a *narodnik.*"[57]

In his later writings, Struve developed more fully the parallel between the Russian "*narodniki*" and the so-called "utopian" socialists of pre-Marxist Germany.[58]

Struve's definition quickly caught on among the Social Democrats, despite vehement protests from many of those who suddenly and against their wishes found themselves thus labeled. "Under this label [of *narodnichestvo*]," wrote Danielson, "which he treats as a pejorative one, [Struve] includes persons of the most diverse views: he heaps them into one pile, and then, as the need arises, extracts from it those he can use for an abuse of *narodnichestvo.* . . . It is obvious, of course, that the vast majority of authors whom he cites have in common with *narodnichestvo* only the desire to discover the causes of the deterioration in the condition of the peasantry, and to outline measures which, in the opinion of each, may lead to their removal."[59] From the point of view of the Social Democrats, however, *narodnichestvo* became a superb polemical device, which they employed to establish Social Democracy as a new and triumphant movement, superseding all the other socialist movements in Russia.

Among those who eagerly adopted it was Lenin. In the spring of 1894—before Struve's book was out—Lenin had written a long polemical work against the publicists of *Russkoe bogatstvo* under the title "Who Are the 'Friends of the People' and How Do They Wage War against the Social Democrats?" In it he still used the word *narodniki* in the traditional, narrow sense as applicable to the adherents of *Zemlia i volia.*[60] After reading Struve's book, which came out in September of

that year, Lenin enthusiastically welcomed what he called Struve's "broad" usage. The fact that Struve treated *narodnichestvo* as a "system of dogmas of economic policy," Lenin said, alone was sufficient to lend his book considerable interest.[61] In a long critical essay devoted to an analysis of Struve's *Critical Remarks*, Lenin accepted Struve's definition, although he severely criticized him for failing to point out the economic interest-base of *narodnichestvo*. Later on, Lenin separated Chernyshevskii from *narodnichestvo* on the grounds that the latter was a petty bourgeois movement expressing the interests of the small producer, whereas Chernyshevskii was a revolutionary democrat.[62] But he was not very consistent in his usage, causing thereby much difficulty for Soviet historians who have been compelled ever since to argue over the true "Leninist" interpretation.[63]

Outside Marxist circles Struve's usage, however, did not prevail. It is interesting to note, for example, that the great history of the Russian revolutionary movement by the Polish historian Ludwig Kulczycki, published in 1909–14, did not make use of *narodnichestvo* as either an historical or an ideological category.[64]

The author who succeeded in introducing Struve's definition into the historical vocabulary was V. Ia. Iakovlev (Bogucharskii). Iakovlev was a friend and associate of Struve's, one of the founders of *Osvobozhdenie*, and the author of several books on the history of the revolutionary movement. From the point of view of historiography, the most important of those was his monograph *Active Narodnichestvo of the Seventies*, published in 1912, where "active" was employed as a euphemism for "revolutionary."[65] Iakovlev provided in it no definition of *narodnichestvo*, using the term loosely for all the radical movements of the seventies whose adherents worked among the people. Like Struve, he derived it from Slavophilism and represented it as the Russian equivalent of Western utopian socialism. Its historic roots lay in the Slavophile-Westerner controversy, and its ideological foundations, provided by Herzen, Chernyshevskii, and Dobroliubov, consisted of an idealization of the peasantry and its communal spirit. *Narodnichestvo*, according to Iakovlev, began with the "going to the people" movement, and was distinguished by the hegemony of the intelligentsia and the rejection of politics. With the *Narodnaia volia*, *narodnichestvo* came to an end and the era of "political realism" got under way.

Iakovlev's interpretation was received very critically by the surviving participants of the radical movement of the seventies. Chaikovskii, reviewing Iakovlev's history of the *Narodnaia volia*, said that the identification of *narodnichestvo* with Slavophilism was a "completely unfounded paradox." To the *narodniki*, the peasant commune and the "separate path" were not ideals, as they had been for the Slavophiles,

but realities of postreform Russian life with which they had to cope.[66] Vorontsov voiced similar criticism, saying that the origins of *narodnichestvo* had to be sought not in Slavophilism but in actual social conditions.[67] Even Plekhanov, now that he had separated himself from the Social Democratic party, reverted to the "narrow" and precise historical usage: "Is Mr. Bogucharskii [Iakovlev] ignorant of the fact that the concept of 'going to the people' far from coincides with the concept of *'narodnichestvo'*? After all, the Lavrovites also 'went to the people' and yet, among other things, they were negatively disposed to *narodnichestvo.* The propagandists of 1873–1874 also were not *narodniki. Narodnichestvo* was the second phase of our movement of the seventies."[68] Non-Marxist socialist historians like L. Shishko and Ivanov-Razumnik also refused to accept the new usage.[69]

If, nevertheless, the definition formulated by Struve and popularized by Iakovlev gradually gained ascendancy, it is because after 1917 Russian historiography became to a large extent a preserve of Marxists.

Our analysis shows the *narodnichestvo* has had two distinct and to some extent contradictory meanings. The earlier one was narrow. It applied to a theory advocating the hegemony of the masses over the educated elite, and represented a grass-roots, pragmatic theory of democratic action. The second, later meaning was broad. It defined not the relation of the elite to the masses but the elite's view of the country's economic development. If in the earlier usage *narodnik* defined those who believed in the hegemony of the masses over the elite, in the later usage it applied to anyone who believed in the ability of Russia to bypass capitalism. *Narodnichestvo* in the former sense was an actual phenomenon, as well as a designation which certain radical groups in 1878–81 actually applied to themselves. In the second sense it was a polemical device created and popularized by Marxist publicists in the early 1890's, which had no historical justification and was rejected by those on whom it was pinned.

NOTES

1. See my *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885–1897* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 74–75n.

2. Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (London, 1960), p. xii.

3. See below, notes 32 and 68.

4. M. Pokrovskii, *Ocherki russkogo revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia XIX–XX vv.: Lektsii* (Moscow, 1924), p. 62; B. P. Kozmin, *P. N. Tkachev i revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie 1860-kh godov* (Moscow, 1922), p. 136; "P. N. Tkachev i narodnichestvo," *Katorga i ssylka,* No. 1 (22) (1926), pp. 109–22.

5. The only attempt to trace the history of these terms known to me has been undertaken by B. P. Kozmin in his "'Narodniki' i 'narodnichestvo'," *Voprosy literatury*, No. 9, 1957, pp. 116–35. Although Kozmin's knowledge of the sources could hardly be surpassed, his analysis was severely cramped by the necessity of having to be accommodated within the framework of Lenin's definitions.

6. N. V. Chaikovskii in *Golos minuvshego na chuzhoi storone*, No. 1/14 (1926), p. 52 and No. 3/16 (1926), p. 180.

7. See, for example, speeches of the defendants in the journal *Vpered*, Vol. V (1877), Part 2, pp. 39, 49.

8. E.g., the newspaper *Vpered*, No. 1 (Jan. 15, 1875), p. 1, and No. 4 (Mar. 1, 1875), p. 100.

9. Venturi, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

10. A. P. Pribyleva-Korba and V. N. Figner, *Narodovolets Aleksandr Dmitrievich Mikhailov* (Leningrad, 1925), p. 145. Written in July, 1881.

11. *Vospominaniia L'va Tikhomirova* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927), p. 86.

12. "Iz rechei na sude A. I. Zheliabova, N. I. Kibal'chicha i S. L. Perovskoi," *Byloe*, No. 3 (Mar., 1906), p. 64; emphasis added. See also the memoirs of M. R. Popov, *Byloe*, No. 8 (Aug., 1906), pp. 33–34.

13. I. Koltsov (L. Tikhomirov), "Shatanie politicheskoi mysli," *Delo*, No. 3 (1883), p. 5, cited by B. P. Kozmin in "Narodnichestvo na burzhuazno-demokraticheskom etape osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia v Rossii," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, No. 65 (1959), p. 217. Cf. P. Akselrod's essay on Russian socialism in *Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 1881, p. 269.

14. See my analysis in *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement*, *passim*.

15. *Arkhiv 'Zemli i voli' i 'Narodnoi voli'* (Moscow, 1930), pp. 53–54.

16. B. Bazilevskii (Iakovlev), *Revoliutsionnaia zhurnalistika semidesiatykh godov* (Paris, 1905).

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–21. Cf. the journal *Obshchina*, No. 1 (1878), p. 3.

18. "Perekhodnyi moment nashei partii," *Obshchina*, No. 8/9 (1878), pp. 22, 31. The "obshchinniki," according to Akselrod, were a southern group.

19. M. F. Frolenko, "Lipetskii i Voronezhskii s"ezdy," *Byloe*, No. 1/13 (Jan., 1907), p. 69.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

21. One publication of *Narodnaia volia* explained its name as follows: "It is, of course, obvious that the members of the party do not regard themselves as expressing and bearing the people's will; however, they fight for an order in which the will of the people will be the determinant of all social norms." *Kalendar' Narodnoi voli* (Geneva, 1883), p. 122n.

22. *Narodnaia volia*, No. 3 (Jan. 1, 1880).

23. *Ibid.*, No. 7 (Dec. 23, 1881).

24. S. Shiriaev, "Zaiavlenie," *Krasnyi arkhiv*, No. 7 (1924), pp. 92–93; emphasis added. The same point was made by the terrorist A. Kviatkovskii at his trial; see *Arkhiv 'Zemli i voli'*, p. 238.

25. *Arkhiv 'Zemli i voli'*, p. 241. See also statements by Kviatkovskii (1879), *ibid.*, p. 104, and (1880), *Krasnyi arkhiv*, No. 1/14 (1926), pp. 160–73, and by

Lev Tikhomirov in his anonymously published pamphlet *Andrei Ivanovich Zheliabov* (London, 1882), p. 29.

26. "Die sozialistische Bewegung in Russland," *Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1879), pp. 267–305, translated in *Katorga i ssylka*, Vol. XIV (1925), where the pertinent passages appear on pp. 45–46, 84.

27. *Chernyi peredel*, No. 1 (Jan. 15, 1880). Written by Plekhanov and reprinted in his *Sochineniia*, 2nd ed., I, 118. Emphasis added.

28. Kozmin, "'Narodniki' . . . ,"p. 124.

29. I. Iuzov (Kablits), *Osnovy narodnichestva* (St. Petersburg, 1882–83), and *Intelligentsiia i narod v obshchestvennoi zhizni Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1886).

30. "Chto takoe narodnichestvo?," *Nedelia*, No. 31 (Aug. 3, 1880), p. 982.

31. *Intelligentsiia i narod* . . . , p. 38.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.

34. S. Vengerov, "Narodnichestvo," *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, XX, 586.

35. V. K. Lavrskii in *Mysl'*, No. 9 (1880), pp. 87–89, cited by Kozmin, "'Narodniki' . . . ," p. 126.

36. *Vestnik Evropy*, No. 2, 1884, p. 702. Similar views were expressed in 1882 by another literary historian, S. A. Vengerov; see Kozmin, "Narodnichestvo . . . ," p. 194.

37. *Vestnik Evropy*, No. 1, 1884, pp. 152–66, and No. 2, 1884, p. 710.

38. *Ibid.*, No. 10, 1892, pp. 706–9.

39. *Ibid.*, No. 8, 1884, pp. 648–84; No. 2, 1888, pp. 846–60; and No. 2, 1884, pp. 655–95.

40. In 1888, A. Skabichevskii published a book called *Belletristy-narodniki* in which he dealt with Uspenskii, Zlatovratskii, A. Levitov, F. Reshetnikov, and others. E. Soloviev gave literary *narodnichestvo* much space in his *Ocherki iz istorii russkoi literatury XIX v.* (St. Petersburg, 1903), where he defined it as a "synthesis" of Westernism and Slavophilism (p. 345). For more recent usage, see V. V. Bush, *Ocherki literaturnogo narodnichestva 70-kh i 80-kh gg.* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1931).

41. *Geschichte der Russischen Revolutionären Bewegung* (Leipzig, 1883), pp. 121, 166.

42. Milan, 1882.

43. London, 1886, pp. 5–6.

44. *La Russie politique et sociale* (Paris, 1886), pp. 424–25.

45. G. V. Plekhanov, *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniia* (Moscow, 1956), I, 66.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 392n.

48. "Popytki obosnovaniia narodnichestva," *Russkoe bogatstvo*, Nos. 2, 3, 6, 10 and 11 for 1892; republished the following year in St. Petersburg in book form as *Nashi napravleniia*.

49. Vorontsov, *Nashi napravleniia*.

50. St. Petersburg, 1893. Volume I had been reprinted in 1888. Tikhomirov wrote in December, 1892, that *narodnichestvo* had been one of the liveliest subjects of conversation of the preceding year. "Chto takoe narodnichestvo?," *Russkoe obozrenie*, VI (Dec., 1892), 911.

51. "Zur Beurtheilung der kapitalistischen Entwickelung Russlands," *Sozialpolitisches Centralblatt*, Vol. III, No. 1 (Oct. 2, 1893). Danielson's book was called *Ocherki nashego poreformennogo obshchestvennogo khoziaistva* (St. Petersburg, 1893).

52. "Zur Beurtheilung . . . ," *op. cit.*

53. *Kriticheskie zametki k voprosu ob ekonomicheskom razvitii* Rossii (St. Petersburg, 1894), pp. 1–2.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 29; emphasis added.

56. See, e.g., N. K. Mikhailovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg, 1909), VII, 541, 885–924.

57. *Kriticheskie zametki* . . . , p. 2n.; emphasis in the original.

58. E.g., "Nashi utopisty," (1897), P. B. Struve, *Na raznye temy (1893–1901 gg.): Sbornik statei* (St. Petersburg, 1902), pp. 60–83.

59. *Russkoe bogatstvo*, No. 2, 1895, Part 2, p. 17n.

60. V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniia* (3rd ed.; Moscow and Leningrad, 1935), I, 165n. Cf., however, *ibid.*, p. 193n., where Lenin speaks of the "*narodniki* in the broadest sense of the word" as "representatives of peasant socialism."

61. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

62. *Ibid.*, II, 303–38.

63. Lenin's inconsistencies have been pointed out by I. A. Teodorovich in "O 'Narodnoi vole'," *Katorga i ssylka*, No. 3 (64) (1930), pp. 7–44, and by Kozmin, "'Narodniki' . . . ," pp. 132–34, and "Narodnichestvo . . . ," *passim.*

64. L. Kulczycki, *Geschichte der Russischen Revolution* (3 vols.; Gotha, 1910–14).

65. V. Bogucharskii (Iakovlev), *Aktivnoe narodnichestvo semidesiatykh godov* (Moscow, 1912). See also his history of the *Narodnaia volia: Iz istorii politicheskoi bor'by v 70-kh i 80-kh gg. XIX v.* (Moscow, 1912), which had originally appeared in Struve's journal, *Russkaia mysl'*. Iakovlev also published several volumes of documents of the revolutionary movement.

66. *Golos minuvshego*, No. 6 (June), 1913, pp. 249–52.

67. VV, "Korni narodnichestva semidesiatykh godov," *Vestnik Evropy*, No. 4, 1913, pp. 146–72.

68. "Neudachnaia istoriia partii 'Narodnoi voli'," originally published in 1912; Plekhanov, *Sochineniia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927), XXIV, 149.

69. V. Ivanov-Razumnik, *Istoriia russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli* (4th ed.; St. Petersburg, 1914), and L. Shishko, *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v shestidesiatykh i pervoi polovine semidesiatykh godov* (Moscow, 1920).

CHAPTER 6

The Origins of Bolshevism: The Intellectual Evolution of Young Lenin

The formulation in 1900–1902 by Lenin of Bolshevik theory is an event that in importance far exceeds the obvious influence it has had on the history of Russia and other countries with Communist governments or movements. Bolshevism originated that characteristic institution of the twentieth century, the one-party state. By dissociating socialism from democracy, and institutionalizing this cleavage in the dictatorial elite that goes by the name of "party" but bears little relationship to what is ordinarily meant by this word, Lenin has turned out to be the most influential political theorist of modern times.

The origins of Lenin's political theory have to be sought at least as much in psychology as in ideas. But Lenin's psyche is a separate subject, and we shall not occupy ourselves with it, except in passing. Our concern shall be with political theory. We shall trace Lenin's thirteen-year-old search for a revolutionary strategy, which began upon his expulsion from the university in 1887 and ended in the closing days of the century when he formulated the basic principles of Bolshevism. As we shall indicate, the central question confronting Lenin was the relation between socialism and democracy or, more concretely, the relationship of revolutionary socialists to three social classes: the peasantry, the industrial working class, and the bourgeoisie. His intellectual evolution went through four phases, each distinguished by a specific answer to this question. During the first phase, extending from 1887–1892, Lenin sympathized with the Jacobin wing of the People's Will. He believed that the revolution would derive its force from the peasant masses and its leadership from a conspiratorial group employing terror and aiming at a power seizure. The second transitional phase began in 1892–93 when Lenin lost faith

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in the revolutionary capacity of the peasantry. He now turned his attention to the industrial proletariat but continued to cling to the techniques of terror and power seizure. In the summer of 1895, Lenin entered the third phase, at which time he became a full-fledged Social Democrat of the Western type. He concluded that socialism could triumph only as a result of a broad oppositional movement of all the social classes, including the liberal bourgeoisie, and that socialism presupposed democracy. In mid-1899, under the shock of various disappointments, he experienced a personal crisis. He now lost faith in both the working class and the liberal bourgeoisie and evolved an undemocratic philosophy of socialism, which fused Jacobin and Marxist elements to produce that peculiar amalgam known as bolshevism.

The difficulties one confronts in attempting to trace Lenin's intellectual evolution are formidable. Lenin left us virtually no autobiographical information, and we possess almost nothing from his pen during the first twenty-three years of his life.[1] The difficulty is compounded by the fact that the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism and other Russian archival repositories have not seen it fit to publish, except in brief excerpts, many documents from the 1880's and 1890's bearing on Lenin, including the correspondence of his sisters and the memoirs of his brother.[2] Nearly all the secondary accounts of Lenin are of post-1917 vintage. By then friend and foe alike sought to link Lenin, the leader of the October Revolution, with Vladimir Ulianov, the young radical intellectual. As a result, Lenin emerges in most Western and nearly all Communist biographies as a person fashioned of one piece: a man unchanging and unhesitating, who from his earliest years (at any rate from the age of 17, when his brother was executed) knew and followed his path. This picture may well be true in the psychological sense, but it certainly does not hold of Lenin's political ideas. He was a politician long before he had an opportunity of practicing politics. He was forever adapting his ideas to realities, and he changed his strategy and tactics more frequently and more abruptly than anya other prominent Russian revolutionary. Unlike typical radical intellectuals of his time, he had no commitment to any set of ideas; and it is ironic that he, the most flexible of revolutionaries, should have acquired the reputation as the most constant.

Virtually all Lenin's biographers mention his early contacts with the People's Will (*Narodnaia volia*), the terrorist organization that, beginning in 1879, engaged in systematic attacks on tsarist officials and in 1881 succeeded in assassinating Alexander II. Lenin is said in his early years to have sought out veterans of the terrorist underground, and questioned them closely on their conspiratorial techniques, in this manner acquiring knowledge which he later put to use in organizing the Bolshevik Party.

Soviet historians, although vehemently denying any connection between Bolshevism and the People's Will, do not, as a rule, gainsay Lenin's admiration for the old terrorists. Nor can they, since Lenin himself, as well as his widow and sister, left unequivocal testimony to this effect.[3]

Lenin's involvement with terrorism and terrorist organizations, however, can be shown to have been much deeper and longer than it is usually depicted. His concern for terrorism was not merely that of an interested outsider: between 1887 and 1893, he was affiliated with three organizations composed almost exclusively of adherents of the People's Will. Even the sparse documentary evidence available to the foreign scholar leaves no doubt that Lenin spent the first five or six years of his revolutionary career in the very midst of the most extreme Jacobin elements of the People's Will.

Lenin's initiation into politics occurred rather accidentally during his first term at the University of Kazan. He had arrived at the university in the autumn of 1887 surprisingly innocent of any political ideas or connections. In the gymnasium at Simbirsk he had been a model student with a nearly perfect record in all subjects, behavior included, and had graduated at the top of his class. It is only because of this impeccable record that he was allowed to enroll at Kazan. The previous spring his elder brother, Alexander, had been executed with four other members of a People's Will organization for participating in a plot to assassinate Alexander III. Normally this family record would have barred Lenin from the university. But he was admitted on the strength of an enthusiastic endorsement supplied by the principal of the Simbirsk gymnasium, Fedor Kerensky, the father of the future head of the Provisional Government whom Lenin was to overthrow. Vladimir Ilich, he wrote, although "reticent" and "unsociable" was in every respect an excellent young man, who "neither in school nor out of it gave his superiors or teachers by a single word or deed any cause to form of him an unfavorable opinion."[4] There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this characterization. The only contrary evidence comes from his sister, who denies that Lenin was quite so perfect because he was known to have ridiculed his French teacher. Even she concedes, however, that on completing the gymnasium Lenin held no "definite" political views.[5]

Despite this background, within a few weeks his arrival at the university, Lenin associated himself with a highly subversive organization. What happened is that he was recognized by fellow students as the brother of a recently executed terrorist and was approached by members of a revolutionary circle headed by one Lazar Bogoraz. Early in the academic year, Lenin joined this group.[6] Insofar as we can judge from the available documentation, the Bogoraz circle intended to reconstitute the People's Will and possibly to complete the mission which Alexander

Ulianov and his associates had failed to carry out, namely the assassination of the tsar. To this end, Bogoraz established contact with terrorists in St. Petersburg.[7]

The designs of Bogoraz's circle were abruptly terminated on December 4, 1887, when many of its members, Lenin among them, became involved in a student demonstration against the new university regulations. As the demonstrators were dispersed, their student cards were taken away. Having returned home that evening, Lenin wrote a formal letter to the university announcing his withdrawal.[8] This desperate effort to prevent expulsion failed. Later that night he was arrested, and a few days later expelled, together with 39 fellow students.[9]

We have at our disposal two interesting glimpses of Lenin at the time of this, his first police detention. In 1924, a Bolshevik writer recalled what he had heard from Lenin in 1905 about his arrest in Kazan. A guard who escorted Lenin is said to have asked him: "Young man, what are you doing? You are up against a wall!" To which Lenin is said to have replied: "Yes, a wall—but a rotten one—touch it, and it will fall apart."[10] The belief that the imperial regime was on the verge of collapse, was, of course, typical of the adherents of the People's Will. And in 1926, a fellow prisoner of Lenin's in Kazan wrote down the story of their detention. He said that the majority of the arrested students were gay and bantered about their future. At one point, someone turned to Lenin, who was sitting apart, lost in thought, and asked what he intended to do after his release. Lenin, we are told, replied: "What is there for me to think about? . . . My road has been paved by my elder brother."[11]

At the time of Lenin's arrest, the Kazan police had not been aware of his association with the Bogoraz circle. This they discovered only subsequently, in the course of investigations of his background carried out on instructions of the governor.[12] Once Lenin's connections with the terrorists became known, he was placed under permanent police surveillance. Because of his brother's and sister's compromising record, and his own association with "undesirables," petitions for pardon, which he and his mother regularly submitted, were equally regularly rejected. Lenin therefore spent the next four years in forced idleness. He engaged during this period in no gainful employment and lived entirely off his mother's widow's pension. It is during these four years that he probably developed that consuming hatred of the "bourgeois" and "cultured" society that remained with him all his life. (How deeply embedded this estrangement became may be illustrated by the fact that years later, when escorting Trotsky around London, Lenin habitually described the sights as "theirs," by which he meant not the English, but the "enemy." "This meaning was always present when [Lenin] spoke of any kind of cultural values or new conquests . . . ," Trotsky adds, "*they* understand

or *they* have, *they* have accomplished or succeeded—but always as enemies.")[13] A brilliant, hard-working student, a recent gold-medallist, he found himself condemned because of a minor breach of discipline to a parasitic existence without any hope of reprieve. How desperate his psychic condition must have been at this time may be gathered from one of his mother's petitions for her son, in which she voiced fears that he may be driven to suicide.[14] Accounts dealing with this period depict Lenin as a singularly disagreeable young man: aggressive, sarcastic, uncommunicative, and friendless.[15]

So far Lenin's involvement in the revolution had been spontaneous and almost accidental; now it became conscious and deliberate. Immediately after his expulsion, during the winter of 1887–88, which he spent with his family in virtual isolation at a country dacha, Lenin interested himself for the first time in social questions. As he later recalled, he never again in his life read as much as during the year that followed.[16] He went over old copies of "fat journals" and the works of "progressive" writers of the preceding quarter century. It was now that he became acquainted with Chernyshevskii, the leading radical publicist of the 1860's. Lenin read and reread Chernyshevskii's essays in the *Contemporary* and his novel, *What Is to Be Done?*, with such thoroughness and involvement that years later he spoke of having been "deeply plowed over" by Chernyshevskii.[17] Precisely what he assimilated from him we cannot tell; later he claimed to have been introduced by Chernyshevskii to Hegel and to philosophical materialism. But there can be little doubt that he came under the spell of Chernyshevskii's style of discourse: his biting sarcasm, utter self-assurance, impatience with ideas unrelated to action, and unwillingness to see anything but stupidity or depravity in any opponent on any issue.

In the autumn of 1888, the Ulianovs resettled in Kazan. At this time there appeared in Kazan a few radicals claiming to profess "Marxism" or "Social Democracy." The most influential among them was N. Fedoseev, who in December 1888 formed his "Marxist" circle. What kind of Marxism Fedoseev and his friends espoused we shall discuss below. Here, suffice it to say that they were moving toward Social Democracy of a Western kind but were still some distance from their goal. Lenin is sometimes mentioned as a member of Fedoseev's circle,[18] but this is clearly wrong. Not only is there no archival information linking Lenin with Fedoseev, but we are told by Lenin himself that he did not know him: "I heard about Fedoseev during my stay in Kazan," Lenin wrote shortly before his death, "but I never met him personally. In the spring of 1889 I left [Kazan] for the Samara province, where at the end of the summer I learned of the arrest of Fedoseev and other members of the Kazan circles, including the one of which I was a member."[19]

Lenin was always parsimonious with autobiographical statements, and with good reason, for he did not want to divulge his early Jacobin associations. It is significant that in this remark he did not see fit to mention what "Kazan circle" he did belong to. It now can be established, however, that in the autumn of 1888 he had joined a circle organized by Maria Chetvergova, a prominent adherent of the People's Will. This circle formed part of a nationwide network established by an escaped Siberian convict, M. V. Sabunaev, with the intention of reviving the People's Will. Chetvergova participated in September 1889 in a secret convocation of these circles held in Kazan, for which she and other of its participants were shortly afterwards arrested.[20] Lenin escaped the same fate only because a few months earlier his mother, alarmed by his contact with revolutionaries in Kazan, decided to move the family to Samara.[21]

There, Lenin continued his association with the People's Will. In Samara he found himself in the heartland of socialist revolutionary sentiment. Samara and its environs were inhabited by many released political prisoners, veterans of both the "Going to the People" and the terrorist movements, who, forbidden to take up residence in the capital cities chose to settle in this agrarian region. Shortly after his arrival, Lenin contacted N. S. Dolgov, who had once been a close associate of Nechaev, the most Jacobin radical of the 1860's.[22] Dolgov in turn introduced Lenin to other local revolutionaries, including two women belonging to the Jacobin organization headed by Zaichnevskii.[23] Lenin thus surrounded himself with Jacobins and terrorists, including persons associated with the leading figures of Russian Jacobinism. In addition, he joined in Samara an illegal circle, headed by A. P. Skliarenko. This circle professed typical "populist" ideas of the time and maintained connections with People's Will adherents in other cities.[24]

Many years after the events here described, when he headed the Soviet government, Lenin, in reply to a party questionnaire inquiring when and where he had begun his revolutionary career, replied "In 1892–1893, in Samara."[25] This unelaborated statement carries striking implications. As we have seen, by 1892–93 Lenin had been arrested and expelled from the university, spent nearly a year under administrative exile, and participated in three illegal circles—those of Bogoraz, Chetvergova, and Skliarenko. Only thanks to good luck he had managed to escape imprisonment when each of these circles in turn was broken up by the police.[26] Why then should he have begun his revolutionary reckoning five years late? To this question the answer is twofold: partly to conceal his past involvement with the People's Will, and partly to mark the beginning of his conversion to Marxism.

Anyone who tries to ascertain precisely when Lenin became a Marxist runs into wide differences of opinion. The earliest date suggested is 1887, that is, when Lenin was sixteen. The source of this dating is Lenin's sister, Maria. According to her, Lenin, upon hearing of his brother's execution, proclaimed, "No, we shall not take this road"—presumably in this manner announcing his conversion to Marxism.[27] Apart from the fact that Maria was not quite ten when this alleged statement had been made, this anecdote (given currency in 1924) deserves no attention because, as we have seen, by immediately joining the terrorist group of Bogoraz, Lenin followed precisely his brother's road. But even serious studies differ on the dating of Lenin's Marxism, some going back as far as 1888–89, others placing it as late as 1892.[28] The differences of opinion on this matter are due less to lack of evidence than to disagreement over the meaning of the word "Marxism."

In the Russian context of the 1880's and early 1890's, Marxism could have one of four meanings. It could refer to Marx's economic analysis as presented in the *Capital*, a work legally circulating in imperial Russia. In this guise it was accepted by many Russian professional economists, even including one with monarchist convictions.[29] On another level, "Marxism" referred to the theory that social relations, political institutions, as well as ideas and all culture constitute a superstructure determined by the economic base. In this sense, Marxism was, of course, hardly compatible with monarchism, but it could be adapted to a variety of oppositional philosophies. Certain of the People's Will adherents, for example, embraced Marx's social doctrine and grafted onto it ideas of terror and power seizure. This held true of the organization with which Lenin's brother had been associated. Its program asserted that every country moved toward socialism by virtue of its economic development, and that under modern conditions the urban proletariat constituted the main socialist force.[30] A liberal like Peter Struve, on the other hand, could accept Marx's social doctrine without subscribing to its revolutionary implications. In the third sense, Marxism meant Social Democracy: a comprehensive theory based on the writings of Marx and Engels as systematized by the theorists of the German Social Democratic Party, and formalized in 1891 in that party's Erfurt Program. The distinguishing feature of the Erfurt Program was its view that liberalism and democracy constituted essential ingredients of socialism. Therefore, it exhorted the working class to strive for full political liberty: that is, civil rights, the universal suffrage, and a genuine parliamentary system of government. Finally, in the fourth sense, Marxism referred to a theory of revolutionary action as presented in the publicist writings of Marx and Engels. In Russia around 1890 it was by no means clear to which of these four

meanings the word "Marxism" referred; hence much of the ensuing confusion over the date of Lenin's "conversion" to it.

Plekhanov and his fellow émigrés who in 1883 had founded in Geneva the First Russian Marxist party espoused from the beginning the Social Democratic brand of Marxism, declaring political liberty to be the immediate and indispensable goal of Russian socialism.[31] Inside Russia, however, it took a long time for self-proclaimed Marxists and Social Democrats to reach this position. The heritage of anarchism here was very strong. The majority of radical intellectuals continued to reject political freedom and representative institutions, because in their eyes these would only serve to ensconce the exploiting classes in power. Fedoseev, whose interesting letters from the early 1890's have been recently published, agonized over this question for some time after he had become a "Marxist."[32] There must have been in Russia many revolutionaries like him: men who accepted Marx's economic and social theory, but who rejected as unsuitable to Russia the political program of Social Democracy and adhered, as before, to terror and power seizure.

The available evidence strongly suggests that from 1892, or at the latest 1893, until mid-1895 Lenin was precisely this kind of a transitional Marxist. At bottom, he was still an adherent of the People's Will of the kind his brother had been, combining with terror, conspiracy, and power seizure the Marxist beliefs in the inexorable force of economic progress and in the revolutionary hegemony of the proletariat. He exemplified that very type which Fedoseev had in mind in 1893 when he wrote of Russian Maxists as "striving to become Social Democrats"[33]—words Lenin was to repeat almost verbatim many years later in recalling his own Samara days.[34]

Lenin seems to have read Marx as early as 1888,[35] but he became seriously interested in him only in 1892. The previous year, the agrarian regions where Lenin lived were struck by a famine. The famine engendered a lively debate among Russian radical intellectuals concerning its causes and long-term implications. One group blamed the hunger on capitalism, claiming that it destroyed cottage industries and impoverished the peasantry to the point where it could no longer support itself. They saw in the hunger conclusive proof that capitalism undercut its own market and therefore had no future in Russia.[36] Their opponents, Marxist publicists led by Peter Struve, interpreted the famine as a by-product of nascent capitalism and saw in it, on the contrary, incontrovertible evidence that the money economy was conquering the country. In this debate, Struve gave currency to the word "populism" as a genetic term embracing all those who thought capitalism in Russia either unlikely or undesirable.[37]

Lenin did not at first participate in these discussions. In June 1890 he had at last received authorization to take the bar examinations in St. Petersburg, and the next year and a half he was busy studying. But in November 1891, when he had passed the tests and returned to Samara, he tackled the polemical literature in earnest. He now read the main publicistic works, as well as numerous statistical surveys issued by local government boards in order to ascertain what was in fact happening to the Russian peasant economy. Among these writings were three manuscripts by Fedoseev on agrarian history and conditions. Lenin was much impressed by Fedoseev's arguments, although there is some dispute whether he did or did not agree with them.[38] These researches he continued throughout 1892 and 1893. His purpose, in his sister's words, was to determine the "feasibility of Social Democracy in Russia."[39]

It was some time at the end of these two years that Lenin reached an important conclusion, one at odds with the leading proponents as well as opponents of the theory of Russia's inevitable capitalization. While they argued about the future, Lenin decided that Russia *already was in the capitalist phase:* capitalism was not a problem; it was a fact. This conclusion is astonishing considering that at the time 87 percent of the population of the Russian empire was rural. But Lenin reached this verdict on the basis of agrarian, not of industrial data. He seems to have been particularly impressed by a study of rural conditions in southern Russia brought out in the winter of 1891–92 by V. E. Postnikov. Postnikov demonstrated to Lenin's satisfaction that the Russian village was in the throes of "class differentiation" in the course of which the land-owning peasant turned into a "petty bourgeois" who exploited hired labor, while the rest of the rural population became proletariarized.[40] According to one of Lenin's calculations at that time, 20 percent of the peasantry of certain provinces could be fully classified as "bourgeois."[41] With such a "middle class" Russia was indeed "capitalist." In 1893, in his earliest writings, Lenin declared: "Capitalism already at the present time is the basic background of Russian economic life;"[42] and "Essentially, our order does not differ from the Western European [that is, capitalist] one."[43]

This remarkable appraisal of Russia's economy had three corollaries. First, the peasantry could no longer be relied upon to serve revolutionary purposes. The communal peasant was bourgeois and as such committed to the *status quo.* Intellectuals who defended his interests—those whom Lenin, adopting Struve's usage, now addressed as "populists"—became reactionaries. This attitude explains why almost alone among Samara intellectuals Lenin in 1892 refused to join relief committees formed by the local intelligentsia to help feed the starving peasants.[44] To him such philanthropy merely strengthened capitalism.

Second, Russia had no need for political liberty in the form of civil freedoms, constitution, and parliament. In a capitalistic country, political liberalization fortified the position of the bourgeoisie. In none of his works written before mid-1895 did Lenin advocate liberalism or democracy. Indeed, in *Who Are the Friends of the People,* written in 1894, he described demands for liberalization as "reactionary" and stated that the time had come to separate democracy from socialism.[45]

Third, as a capitalistic country, Russia was ripe for a socialist revolution of the kind envisaged in the *Communist Manifesto.* "The Russian economic order is a bourgeois system," Lenin wrote in 1894, "from which there is only one way out . . . namely the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie."[46] This revolutionary struggle had to be directed simultaneously against both the autocracy and the bourgeoisie. In other words, Russia was ready for communism.[47]

Lenin thus retained his earlier Jacobin beliefs but in a modernized, Marxist guise. By proclaiming Russia capitalist, he could still call for an immediate socialist revolution, without having to wait patiently for capitalism to mature. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn from persons acquainted with Lenin in 1892–93 that at this time, while ostensibly a "Marxist" and even a "Social Democrat," he continued to advocate terror and power seizure and in discussions with admirers of German Social Democracy to challenge their "constitutional illusions."[48] After six years of quest, Lenin had reached the same position that his brother, unknown to him, had formulated in 1887, on the eve of his execution.

This second phase of Lenin's intellectual development came to an abrupt end in the summer of 1895, when he converted to Social Democracy in the ordinary, Western meaning of the word then current. This particular conversion was so smooth and sudden, so devoid of the crisis atmosphere attending Lenin's other intellectual shifts, that it is natural to wonder whether it represented, at least initially, a genuine intellectual commitment rather than merely a tactical maneuver.

In the autumn of 1893, Lenin had established himself in St. Petersburg. Outwardly, he made a living as a practicing lawyer, but since no evidence has been found connecting him in the capital with any legal proceedings, we may assume that he continued as before to live off his mother. Shortly after his arrival, he contacted a small group of radicals who conducted tutorial sessions with skilled workers—activity known as "propaganda." Its purpose was to lead the workers through a broad educational program to an acceptance of socialism and in this manner to build up cadres of socialist labor leaders—"Russian Bebels." Lenin himself had little confidence in this activity that at best produced a labor intelligentsia with all of the intelligentsia's shortcomings and at

worst promised speedy arrest and jail for the propagandists as well as their pupils. As far as can be determined, he conducted no regular worker propaganda in St. Petersburg for a year and a half after his arrival, although on a few occasions he did contribute leaflets urging workers to strike.[49] During this time Lenin concentrated on literary activity, drafting reviews and essays in which he expounded his strange views on the advanced level of Russia's capitalist development and the need for an imminent anti-bourgeois, Communist revolution. None of these writings, including those intended for the legal press, found a publisher.

In September 1894 there appeared on the bookstalls a Marxist analysis of Russia's current economic situation, Struve's *Critical Remarks on the Question of Russia's Economic Development*,[50] in which he depicted the advent of capitalism in Russia as both inevitable and beneficial. The book created a sensation not only because it was one of the first Marxist studies legally published in Russia, but because Struve took the position, unfamiliar in that country, of defending the progressive function of capitalism from a socialist standpoint.

As soon as Lenin had read Struve's book he subjected it to a scathing critique in a lengthy essay called "The Reflection of Marxism in Russian Bourgeois Literature." Unfortunately, the original version of this essay is lost, and our knowledge of it derives mainly from the recollections of Struve told to a third person a quarter of a century later and reconstructed by that person from memory after another third of a century had lapsed.[51] Lenin seems to have objected principally to Struve's timetable of capitalist development. "Lenin showed," Struve recalled, "that capitalism had completely taken over the country, and that I did not sufficiently appreciate this fact, depicting capitalism not so much as a factor already present in all its vigor, but as something lying in the future."[52] In the winter of 1894–95 the two men met, and engaged in long discussions. According to Struve, although Lenin denied in these conversations the possibility of a "leap into the future," that is, of an immediate transition to socialism, "all the same one felt that the thought of such a leap was stuck somewhere in his head."[53]

Despite these differences, Struve and Lenin agreed in their hostility to the so-called "populists," and this permitted them to form a working alliance. Its immediate purpose was to arrange for the publication of another Marxist volume, a collective undertaking directed against the "populists": but beyond this, the agreement represented the first stage in the projected formation of a Social Democratic party. Long negotiations ensued, for Lenin insisted on printing in the symposium his critique of Struve in its original form. Being pressed by Struve and his associates to revise it, he sought the advice of another reader, namely Fedoseev.[54]

Fedoseev by this time had become a full-fledged Social Democrat, and as such had little patience with Lenin's basic assumption. Two years earlier he had characterized as "fools" or "corrupt Pharisees" those who considered Russia already in the midst of capitalism because they ignored the difference between "primary capitalist accumulation" and capitalism proper.[55] On his advice, Lenin agreed to alter the manuscript. In the form in which it finally appeared it mainly criticized Struve for his failure to point out that the "populists" represented the interests of the "petty bourgeoisie" and for its "objective," "professorial" approach.[56]

During their long discussions Struve once told Lenin that he would understand true capitalism only after he had been abroad, especially to Germany.[57] In the summer of 1895 Lenin undertook his first foreign journey, in the course of which he visited Germany, Switzerland, and France. There he read a great deal of current Social Democratic literature and attended meetings organized by the German Social Democratic Party. He also met with Plekhanov, Akselrod, and the other veterans of Russian Social Democracy residing in Geneva. He made a good impression on Plekhanov and Akselrod but disconcerted them with his views on the liberals. "We turn our faces toward the liberals," Plekhanov told Lenin, "whereas you turn on them your back."[58] Behind these differences, as behind Lenin's disagreements with Struve, lay, of course, divergent estimates of the level of Russia's capitalist development.

Whatever he had thought upon leaving Russia, upon his return there in the autumn of 1895 Lenin presented himself as a regular Social Democrat, determined to work with others for the creation of a Russian Social Democratic party on the German model. This object required several efforts: one of them being to secure a political following among the industrial workers and another to constitute a common front against the autocracy with all oppositional groups, notably the "bourgeois" liberals.

How did one obtain leadership over the working class? The workers were very suspicious of intellectuals, connections with whom were certain to attract the attention of the police. At this time, the bulk of the working population was as conservative and unapproachable as the peasantry had been during the "going to the people" crusades twenty years previous. Even the labor elite, the well paid workers organized in study circles with whom the intellectuals maintained tenuous connections, showed no interest in socialism or politics, being exclusively concerned with intellectual and economic self-improvement.

To overcome this indifference and to involve workers in politics, Polish and Jewish socialists active in the Western provinces of the empire, had devised in the late 1880's and early 1890's a technique known as "agitation." Rather than preach politics as the propagandists had done,

the proponents of "agitation" hoped to make the worker aware of the need for political action by encouraging him to pursue his immediate economic aims. The plan was to enlighten the workers about their legal rights, to show how employers violated them, and in this manner to incite industrial strikes. Once the workers struck, they were bound to discover that behind the employers stood the whole apparatus of the state and from this discovery, it was hoped, realize that they could not improve their economic situation without gaining political influence, that is, without supporting the cause of Social Democracy. In brief, labor would become politicized and open to socialist influence through essentially trade-unionist activities.[59]

In the autumn of 1895 Iulii Martov, a Jewish socialist from Lithuania, persuaded Lenin and his associates to abandon "propaganda" in favor of "agitation." For three months the group gathered facts on violations of labor laws in various St. Petersburg factories and from them drafted leaflets inciting the workers to strike. Then in December 1895 to January 1896 the police rounded up the leading "agitators," including Lenin and Martov, and put them in prison. Despite this fiasco, the "agitators" did not lose heart, for others continued their work. In May, 1896, 30,000 St. Petersburg textile workers went on strike. This was the greatest work stoppage experienced in Russia until then; and although the intellectuals had next to nothing to do with either its outbreak of management, they interpreted the strike as a brilliant vindication of the "agitational" method. Lenin was so much carried away that in a second of two drafts of a Social Democratic party program that he composed in prison, he stated that Social Democrats should henceforth concentrate their *main attention* on helping workers improve their condition. "The struggle of workers with the factor owners for their daily needs," he wrote, "confronts them *of itself and inevitably* with problems of state and politics."[60]

If we now turn to Lenin's political ideas after mid-1895, we find a striking change. As late as the summer of 1894 he had written that socialism and democracy had to part ways;[61] now he asserted with equal conviction that socialism and democracy were inseparable.[62]

Lenin first made approving mention of constitution and parliament in an obituary of Engels, which he wrote in the autumn of 1895.[63] He developed the argument more fully in the first draft of the party program, which he composed in prison shortly after his arrest. He now no longer viewed Russia as a country in the throes of capitalism, but rather as one with a semi-feudal complexion; the main enemy of the working class was not, as it had been previously for him, the bourgeoisie, but the autocracy. "The struggle of the Russian working class for its liberation is a political struggle, and its goal is the attainment of political liberty."[64] In accord with this thought, Lenin called for the convocation of a Land

Assembly (*Zemskii Sobor*) to draft a constitution and for the introduction of universal suffrage and of full civil liberties. "The Social Democratic Party declares," Lenin says in this draft, "that it will support all strata of the bourgeoisie engaged in a struggle against the autocratic government."[65] In another programmatic statement drafted in 1897, Lenin insisted on the connection between socialism and democracy even more forcefully: "The democratic struggle is inseparable from the socialist one; [it is] impossible to wage a successful fight for the cause of labor without the attainment of full liberty and the democratization of Russia's political and social order."[66] At the same time, he condemned as outdated conspiracy and power seizure.

There is no need to go into Lenin's ideas during this phase, because they are those familiar from the history of Western Social Democracy. This was a happy time for Lenin. Even though he spent two years in prison and three in Siberia, he was confident of the future, entertaining no doubts about the ultimate triumph of the revolutionary cause. He felt himself a member of an irresistible movement and experienced none of the crises or fits of destructive rage so characteristic of him at other periods. His self-assured mood is evidenced by the unusual tolerance he now displayed toward diverse opinions voiced by fellow Social Democrats. He even expressed admiration for Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whose *Industrial Democracy* he translated into Russian at this time.[67]

This happy period came to an abrupt end in the summer of 1899, when Lenin experienced a new crisis, the most prolonged and important of his life. This crisis came to a head in December 1900—the last flicker of the nineteenth century—when Lenin found a way out of his perplexity by devising a new political doctrine.

The original cause of this crisis was Lenin's disillusionment with the industrial proletariat. While Lenin, Martov, and the other members of the initial group of St. Petersburg "agitators" were under confinement, the relations between labor and the radical intelligentsia in Russia underwent subtle change. In the late 1890's the working class grew so rapidly both in numbers and in strength that the handful of radical intellectuals how had managed to stay out of jail could no longer pretend to lead it. Russian labor had become an independent force. Under the direction of its own intelligentsia, many of them graduates of propaganda circles, it was moving toward mature trade unionism. In these circumstances, socialist "agitators," if they wished to retain any contacts with labor, had to acquiesce to a status of auxiliaries or functionaries of an essentially trade-union machinery. In late 1897 voices began to be heard among radical intellectuals favoring a frank acknowledgment of the changed situation: that is, an indefinite postponement of the political struggle in favor of helping labor in its struggle for economic improvement.

This heresy, later known as "economism," proposed to divest agitation—at least temporarily—of that political function for the sake of which it had been originally devised.[68] The labor newspaper, *Worker's Thought* founded in October 1897, served as the organ of the "economist" school, which in 1898 and 1899 gained ascendancy within the Russian Social Democrat movement both at home and abroad.[69]

Lenin was not entirely oblivious of this development. In 1897, during a few days freedom granted them before their departure for Siberia, he and Martov met with a group of "agitators" in St. Petersburg and found to their dismay that the latter were wholly absorbed in setting up mutual assistance funds for labor.[70] Nor could Lenin have been unaware of the skepticism of some of the older Social Democrats, like Akselrod, who as early as 1896 had expressed their misgivings about the whole "agitational" method.[71] But neither then, nor in 1898 and the first half of 1899, did Lenin attach significance to these warnings.

Then, in the summer of 1899, when his term of exile was drawing to a close, Lenin received from his sister a document drafted by one of the exponents of the "economist" tendency, a document which subsequently became known as the "Credo." Its author urged the socialists to abandon the political struggle to the bourgeoisie and to concentrate their own efforts on promoting the economic well-being of the working class.[72] Why it was this casually drafted document that should suddenly have so alarmed Lenin, it is difficult to tell. But it is certain that it immediately alerted him to the threat to the revolutionary cause implicit in "agitation" and before long caused him to reconsider his entire attitude toward industrial labor.

Lenin's unhappiness with the "economists" was exacerbated by the emergence in Russia of revisionism. In early 1899, several leading Russian socialists, led by Struve, called publicly for a reappraisal of some of Marx's theories and, like Bernstein and his German followers, began to question the feasibility of social revolution.[73] Lenin at first attached much less importance to revisionism than to economism. He disliked it all along, considering it a "scholastic" exercise and therefore a waste of time, but he did not think it prudent to weaken the Social Democratic movement by exposing its internal theoretical differences to the common enemy, the "populists." Indeed, he at first urged his colleagues to keep on good terms with Struve even after Struve had enraged Plekhanov with his calls for a massive "reappraisal" of Marx.[74] Still, revisionism was a bad portent, the more so that it came to Lenin's attention concurrently with economism and before long became confounded with it in his mind.

Krupskaia, Lenin's wife, reports that in the summer of 1899 Lenin underwent a visible change: he lost weight and began to suffer from

sleeplessness.[75] He now spent all his time pondering the causes of the malaise in the Social Democratic movement and devising remedies capable of curing it.

He concluded initially that economism was a result of the dispersion and isolation of socialist and labor groups operating in various parts of Russia. Separated from each other, the local circles inevitably lost sight of the movement as a whole and lapsed into apolitical trade unionism. To extricate them from this rut, it was necessary to found an all-Russian socialist newspaper.[76] This newspaper Lenin and Martov conceived on the model of the *Sozialdmokrat,* the central organ of the German Social Democratic party during the years of Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law. It was to be an organ of Social Democrats uniting all politically minded oppositional groups and specifically directed against economism. Such was the origin of what later became *Iskra.*

But a newspaper was not enough, and Lenin now began seriously to rethink the function and structure of the socialist party. In late 1899 he observed ominously that the Social Democrats lagged behind the "old revolutionaries," that is, the People's Will, in matters of party organization.[77] These were the first indications that Lenin was beginning to question current Social Democratic practices.

Lenin spent the year 1900 in Germany and Switzerland on exhausting negotiations leading to the founding of *Iskra.* Now everything went wrong. Plekhanov sneered at the concessions Lenin had made to Struve in order to secure Struve's financial and editorial help for *Iskra* and altogether treated him disdainfully.[78] Struve, in turn, objected to being publicly labeled a turncoat to the movement by Plekhanov and others with whom he had undertaken to collaborate. Money was short. To make matters worse, the Socialists-Revolutionaries, successors to the old People's Will, gave indications of launching a rival party. In August 1900 Martov and Lenin, driven to desperation, considered giving up *Iskra* and returning to Russia.[79]

The whole Social Democratic movement, in which Lenin had placed so much confidence, suddenly seemed on the verge of disintegration. "Russian Social Democracy is living through a period of wavering, a period of doubts which approach self-denial," Lenin wrote in November–December 1900 in a seminal paper called "Urgent Questions of Our Movement." "On the one hand, the labor movement separates itself from socialism . . . , on the other, socialism separates itself from the labor movement."[80] This process presents enormous dangers because—and here Lenin first utters the fateful words—"the labor movement, separated from Social Democracy . . . inevitably becomes bourgeois."[81]

We have reached a critical moment in Lenin's intellectual evolution. Seven or or eight years earlier he had rejected the peasantry as a petty

bourgeois, reactionary class; now he comes to doubt the revolutionary potential of labor. The working class, as he henceforth sees it, is revolutionary *only* insofar as it fuses with, that is, is led by Social Democrats. Therefore, Social Democrats must aspire not to assist labor but to direct it: "to inculcate socialist ideas and political self-consciousness into the mass of the proletariat and to organize a revolutionary party, indissolubly bound with the spontaneous labor movement."[82] "No single class in history," Lenin writes in "Urgent Questions," "has ever attained mastery unless it has produced political leaders, its leading representatives, capable of organizing the movement and leading it. . . . It is necessary to prepare men who devote to the revolution not only their free evenings, but their whole lives."[83]

Here Lenin formulates the basic tenets of Bolshevism and outlines a practical policy in the shape of a professional body of full-time revolutionaries, to direct the labor movement and to keep it from straying into the bourgeois morass where its own inclinations push it. His unspoken assumption is that the majority of the population is actually or potentially reactionary; his unspoken conclusion, that democracy leads to reaction. Democracy is incompatible with revolution and therefore must be dissociated from socialism. Indeed, Lenin now begins to talk of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" not in the usual Marxist sense of the hegemony of the once exploited multitude over their previous exploiters, but of the rule by a "revolutionary" segment over the "petty bourgeois" segment.[84] The principles of *Führertum* and the one-party totalitarian state in all its numerous guises are fully inherent in these sentiments.

Having lost faith in the working class, Lenin did not take long to break away from the liberal bourgeoisie, with whom he had never felt comfortable anyway. Throughout 1900 he had engaged in protracted negotiations with Struve, who in that year left the Social Democrats and became a spokesman of liberal groups. By December 1900 Lenin concluded that Struve and the liberals wanted to exploit the Social Democratic movement in order to wring from autocracy concessions for the bourgeoisie. After one of the stormy meetings Lenin noted that these negotiations had marked for him "the close of a period in his life,"[85] by which he meant, the end of that era when he had believed it possible to collaborate with the liberal bourgeoisie—in other words, his Social Democratic phase.

Lenin finally severed ties with the liberals in the spring of 1901. At that time Struve published Sergei Witte's *Autocracy and zemstvo,* with a substantial introduction of his own. Witte, in what was intended as a memorandum to the tsar, urged the curtailment of the organs of local self-rule, the so-called *zemstva,* as a threat to autocratic authority. In his introduction, Struve took the opposition position. He argued that it was

in the interest of the monarchy to preserve and strengthen *zemstva* as protection against revolutionary movements. The curtailment of the *zemstva*, he wrote, would hand the revolutionaries their "trump card."[86]

In arguing this point, Struve used language calculated to persuade the government that it lay in its own interest to preserve the *zemstva:* language the government could understand and possibly find convincing. But Lenin interpreted Struve's argument quite differently. He concluded that Struve was betraying the revolutionaries: he was deliberately conducting a double policy, helping the revolutionaries only as a means of exerting pressure on the monarchy on behalf of the bourgeoisie. From now on, in correspondence, he often referred to Struve as "Judas." Later that spring Lenin wrote an essay in which he took to task not only Struve but the liberals in general. A striking feature of this essay was the description of the *zemstva* as "tools" of autocracy.[87] Lenin was now reverting to the position he had held before 1895, when he had regarded the entire bourgeoisie as a reactionary class allied with the autocracy against socialism. As a concession to Plekhanov and Akselrod he somewhat softened the language of this essay, but he kept his convictions. "Zemstvo liberalism," Lenin wrote Plekhanov in 1901, "is in respect to its influence on society a counterpart of what economism is in respect to labor. We must persecute both one and the other."[88]

Lenin now burnt his bridges. He disassociated himself from all those forces, the alliance with which in the preceding five years he had regarded as essential for the triumph of socialism: the labor movement; the liberals; even Plekhanov and the other veterans of the movement. He saw himself as the only genuine revolutionary—a leader with followers but no longer any allies. Around him were nothing but reactionaries, opportunists, traitors. "We are moving in a tight band along a precipitous and difficult path, clutching each other's hands," Lenin wrote that winter, "We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we must always advance under their fire."[89]

Lenin had tried all possible allies and found them wanting: the peasantry, he had decided long before was "petty bourgeois"; the proletariat, potentially the most revolutionary class, left to its own devices, turned "bourgeois"; and the bourgeoisie proper was at one with the autocracy. A socialist revolution could be achieved, therefore, only in the teeth of the majority: Social Democracy was unrealizable. Although in 1905 and again in 1917 Lenin was to attach great importance to mass movements in the cities and the countryside, he did so for tactical reasons only. He never again reverted to that faith in democratic socialism that he had briefly entertained in the late 1890's.

In 1903 Lenin had a chance to find confirmation of his political views in the early writings of Marx and Engels brought out by Franz Mehring

the preceding year.[90] Henceforth, he proudly adopted the name "Jacobin" which the Mensheviks had taunted him with after he had made known his unorthodox views, and proudly identified the Bolsheviks as the "Jacobins of contemporary Social Democracy."[91]

Bertolt Brecht, reflecting on the Berlin uprising of 1953, asked himself: since the government has lost confidence in the people, why not dissolve the people? This thought was not far from Lenin's mind in the closing days of the nineteenth century when, realistically surveying the forces available for a socialist revolution, he formulated his political strategy.

NOTES

1. The most complete bibliography of Lenin's writings is that published by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the title *Khronologicheskii ukazatel' proizvedenii V.I. Lenina,* 2 vols. (Moscow, 1959–1962). Prior to the spring of 1893 it lists a total of 25 items (nos. 1–23, 10375 and 10376) of which 17 are official petitions or certificates, 3 marginalia, 2 telegrams, 2 legal defense briefs, and one an advertisement.

2. The Institute of Marxism-Leninism has, among other pertinent documents, the letters of Maria, Anna, and Olga Ulianovas from the late 1880's. Excerpts from them have appeared in B. Volin's *V.I. Lenin v Povolzh'e* (Moscow, 1955), pp. 53, 57–58, 92. References to unpublished memoirs of brother Dimitrii deposited at the Kokushkino Lenin Museum are made in *Uchenye Zapiski Kazanskogo Universiteta,* Vol. 114 (1954), no. 9, pp. 24–25. Other pertinent memoirs, such as those of M.L. Mandelshtam (see below, note 19), remain unpublished as well.

3. "Many [Social Democrats] began to think in a revolutionary manner as *Narodovol'tsy.* From their early youth onwards, almost all bowed in exultation before the heroes of terror. The rejection of the adored image of this terroristic tradition required a struggle accompanied by a break with those who, regardless of the consequences wished to remain loyal to the People's Will, and whom the young Social Democrats regarded so highly." *Chto delat'?* in V.I. Lenin, *Sochineniia,* 2nd ed., IV, p. 499. (All further references to Lenin's Works, unless otherwise noted, are to this second edition.) Krupskaia, citing this passage in her Memoirs, calls it "a piece of Vladimir Il'ich's biography." (N.K. Krupskaia, *Vospominaniia o Lenine,* 2nd ed., Moscow, 1933, p. 37.) Lenin's sister, Anna, also states that "[Lenin] always felt a deep regard for the old *Narodovol'tsy*" (*Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar Granat,* Vol XLI, Pt. 1, p. 309). So does Zinoviev in his early biography (*N. Lenin,* Moscow, 1920, p. 8).

4. *Molodaia gvardiia,* No. 1 (1924), p. 89.

5. A.I. Ulianova-Elizarova in *Aleksandr Il'ich Ul'ianov i delo 1 marta 1887 g.,* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), p. 97. Lenin's lack of political concerns during his gymnasium years is confirmed by V. Alekseev and A. Shver in *Sem'ia Ul'ianovykh v Simbirske, 1896–1897* (Leningrad, 1925), pp. 48–51.

6. Documents bearing on the Bogoraz circle are deposited at the Central State Historical Archive in Moscow (TsGIAM), Delo Departamenta Politsii. They have been partly reproduced by M.K. Korbut in "Kazanskoe revoliutsionnoe podpol'e kontsa 80-kh godov i Lenin," *Katorga i ssylka*, No. 8/9 (81/82), (1931), pp. 7–27 and in *Krasnyi arkhiv*, No. 62 (1934), pp. 65–66. The background of this circle is sketched in G.E. Khait, "V kazanskom kruzhke," *Novyi Mir*, No. 4 (1958), pp. 189–193. On Bogoraz, see V.I. Nevskii, ed., *Deiateli revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii-Bio-bibliograficheskii slovar'*, Vol. V, vyp. 1 (Moscow, 1931), p. 398. B. Volin's *V.I. Lenin v Povol'zhe* concedes that Lenin belonged to Bogoraz's circle (p. 52) but misleadingly describes the latter as a circle for "political self-education." See also, *Novyi mir*, No. 4 (1957), p. 147.

7. The St. Petersburg contact was one Vassilii Zelenenko, whom the police arrested in 1888. Documents found on him told of the organization's desire to "display activity and thereby demonstrate the revival of the revolutionary party" [that is, the *Narodnaia Volia*]. Khait, "V kazanskom kruzhke," pp. 190–192; Korbut, "Kazanskoe revoliutsionnoe podpol'e," p. 16; *Krasnyi arkhiv*, No. 62 (1934), p. 65.

8. This letter is reproduced in A.I. Ivanskii, *Molodye gody V.I. Lenina* [(Moscow), 1958], p. 278.

9. The names of the students expelled with Lenin are listed in M.K. Korbut, *Kazanskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet imeni V.I. Ul'ianova-Lenina za 125 let*, II (Kazan, 1930), pp. 199–201.

10. V. Adoratskii, "Za 18 let (Vstrechi s Vladimirom Il'ichem)," *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia*, No. 3 (26), (1924), p. 94.

11. E. Foss, "Pervaia tiurma V.I. Lenina," *Ogonek*, No. 11 (1926), p. 5.

12. Spisok lits nakhodivshikhsia v blizkom znakomstve i snosheniiakh s . . . Vl. Il. Ulianovym," Delo Departamenta Politsii, 1886 g., No. 151, 3 deloproizvodstvo, l. 108 i sl., dated February 4, 1888, and cited in Korbut, "Kazanskoe revoliutsionnoe podpol'e," pp. 19–20.

13. L. Trotsky, *Lenin* (New York, 1925), pp. 7–8.

14. Petition of May 17, 1890, *Krasnaia Letopis'*, No. 2/11 (1924), p. 35.

15. Ivanskii, *Molodye gody*, pp. 210, 249, 264. A.I. Ulianova in Institut MELS, *Vospominaniia rodnykh o V.I. Lenine* (Moscow, 1955), pp. 22–26.

16. N. Valentinov, *Vstrechi s Leninym* (New York, 1953), p. 106. Valentinov cites an account written down by V.V. Vorovskii in 1919 on the basis of talks which he and Valentinov had had with Lenin fifteen years earlier.

17. Valentinov, *Vstrechi s Leninym*, p. 103. See also the accurate and illuminating essay by the same author, "Chernyshevskii i Lenin," *Novyi Zhurnal*, No. XXVI (1951), pp. 193–216, and No. XXVII (1951), pp. 225–249. Valentinov considers Chernyshevskii to have been the single most important influence in the formation of Lenin's political views. Without denying the influence of Chernyshevskii, we would attach even greater importance to the whole People's Will–Jacobin tradition which Lenin absorbed during his formative years.

18. For example, Volin in *Lenin v Povolzh'e*, pp. 60–67.

19. "Neskol'ko slov o N.E. Fedoseeve," *Sochineniia*, XXVII, p. 376. Lenin's sister Anna confirms that Lenin did not belong to Fedoseev's circle (A.I. Ul'ianova

in *Vospominaniia rodnykh*, p. 26). There was in Kazan at this time another circle in which Marx was seriously studied, headed by M.L. Mandelshtam. It owed its allegiance to the People's Will. Lenin is sometimes listed as belonging to Mandelshtam's group by Soviet historians (for example, Korbut, "Kazanskoe revoliutsionnoe podpol'e," p. 24). But since Mandelshtam himself "learned" of Lenin's alleged membership in his circle only in 1928, we may safely disregard this claim. (See the excerpt from Mandelshtam's unpublished memoirs in *Moskva*, No. 4 (1958), p. 57.) On the other hand, it is entirely possible that Lenin first became acquainted with Marx at a lecture delivered by Mandelshtam, as recalled by K. Radek from his conversation with Lenin in Berne in 1915: see his "Iz rasskazov tov. Lenina o ego vstuplenii v revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie," in *Rabochaia Moskva*, No. 92, April 22, 1924.

20. We know that Lenin attended Chetvergova's circle from information provided in *Novyi mir*, No. 4 (1957), p. 147. Lenin visited Chetvergova in Ufa in 1900, as he was returning from Siberian exile. Krupskaia notes that Lenin "displayed [toward her] a special gentleness in his voice and expression" (*Vospominaniia*, p. 37). Krupskaia's statement about Lenin and the *Narodovol'tsy*, cited above in note 3, refers to Chetvergova. See also N. Valentinov, *Vstrechi s Leninym* (New York, 1953), pp. 38–39. According to S. Livshits ("Ocherki istorii Kazanskoi sotsial-demokratii, 1888–1916 gg.", Pt. 1, *Puti Revoliutsii*, No. 1, Kazan, 1922, pp. 98–99), Chetvergova's circle was originally formed by Aleksei Trofimov, but he must be mistaken in dating its formation summer 1889. Chetvergova, born about 1845 and educated in Zurich and Vienna, was first arrested in 1875 for "propaganda," that is, for participating in the "Going to the People" movement. The 1889 conference of *Narodovol'tsy* organized by Sabunaev is described in *Obzor vazhneishikh doznanii, proizvodivshikhsia v zhandarmskikh upravleniiakh imperii po delam o gusudarstvennykh prestupleniiakh* for 1890, pp. 39–40, 125. See also *Moskva*, No. 4 (1958), p. 56.

21. The fears of Lenin's mother are recalled by Lenin's sister in *Puti Revoliutsii*, No. 2 (Kazan, 1922), p. 9. A recent historian of the People's Will, S.S. Volk states that in December 1880 Lenin himself participated in discussions with Sabunaev, but provides no further details. (*Narodnaia Volia, 1879–1882*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1966, p. 448).

22. On Dolgov, see F. Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (New York, 1960), p. 374. In 1869 he had belonged to Nechaev's main circle, *Narodnaia rasprava* (People's Summary Justice) and later participated in the so-called Dolgushin conspiracy organized by Nechaev's followers. Another friend of Lenin's in Samara, A.I. Livanov, had also belonged to the Dolgushin group. (See Ivanskii, *Molodye gody*, p. 328, and *V.I. Lenin v Samare, 1889–1893—Sbornik vospominanii* (Moscow, 1933), p. 6.

23. They were Mariia Petrovna Golubeva-Iasneva and Adelaida Ivanovna Romanova, both recently returned from Siberian exile. See M. Golubeva, "Poslednii karaul," *Molodaia gvardiia*, No. 2/3 (1924), pp. 29–31, and "Iunosha Ul'ianov (V.I. Lenin)," *Staryi Bol'shevik*, No. 5/8 (1933), pp. 160–164. Golubeva was a close associate of Zaichnevskii's and left recollections of him: *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, No. 6/7 (18/19), (1923), pp. 27–31. Both women later joined the Bolshevik Party.

24. Our principal information on the Skliarenko circle comes from one of its members, M.I. Semenov (M. Blan): "Pamiati druga" in *Staryi tovarishch Aleksei Pavlovich Skliarenko* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 7–19 and *Lenin v Samare 1889–1893* (Moscow, 1933; a second, revised edition came out in Kuibyshev in 1940 under the title *Revoliutsionnaia Samara 80-90-kh godov*). There are also memoirs of A. Beliakov, *Iunost' Vozhdia*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1960), originally written in 1926; the printed version, however, according to a publisher's note, has been "slightly abbreviated" and given a "literary working-over," for which reason it must be regarded as a suspect source. According to Semenov, in 1889 when Lenin joined his circle, Skliarenko was a follower of Mikhailovskii and V.V. (Vorontsov), that is, of the two leading agrarian socialists (*K Samarskomu periodu*, p. 37). Semenov also tells us that before turning "Marxist," Skliarenko and his group had been adherents of the People's Will ("Staryi tovarishch," pp. 7 and 10; *K Samarskomu periodu*, p. 44).

25. *Leninskii Sbornik*, XX p. 51. Written in 1921.

26. The Bogoraz circle was arrested in the winter of 1887–88; Chetevergova was jailed in 1890, and Skliarenko and his group in late 1893.

27. Institut MELS, *Vospominaniia rodnykh o V.I. Lenine* (Moscow, 1955), p. 85.

28. The question of Lenin's exposure to Marx (see below, note 35) must be kept distinct from his "conversion" to Marxism. The sources date the "conversion" of Skliarenko's circle either in 1891 (Semenov, *Revoliutsionnaia Samara*, p. 44) or 1892 (V. Chuev, *V.I. Lenin v Samare, 1889–1893gg.*, Moscow, 1960, p. 75). But as we shall see (note 48), a Marxist visitor to Samara in early 1893 passes in silence over Lenin's "Marxism."

29. For example, A.I. Skvortsov, the author of a book on the influence of steam transport on the Russian economy, published in Warsaw in 1890. For a while he was considered by young Russian radicals a fellow Marxist, but when they discovered he was a monarchist and an anti-Semite, they dropped him.

30. *Aleksandr Il'ich Ul'ianov i delo 1 marta 1887g.* It is a great mistake to contrast "populism" with "Marxism." In fact, the so-called "populists" absorbed a great deal of Marxist theory. This holds particularly true of the People's Will, which both Marx and Engels greatly admired. See also my essay "Russian Marxism and Its Populist Background," *The Russian Review*, October 1960, pp. 316–337.

31. See for example, "Sovremennye zadachi russkikh rabochikh" (1885), in G.V. Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, II (Moscow-Petrograd, n.d.), p. 371 and "Vtoroi proekt programmy russkikh sotsial-demokratov (1887–88)," *Ibid.*, pp. 400–404.

32. N. Fedoseev, *Stat'i i pis'ma* (Moscow, 1958), p. 77.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

34. Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXVII, p. 376. Lenin told Radek that after he had become acquainted with Engels' *Anti-Duehring*, he wrote a "pamphlet in which he tried to reconcile Marxism with the practice of People's Will," *Rabochaia Moskva, loc. cit.*

35. There is general agreement that Lenin first read Marx in the fall or winter of 1888–89. Cf. A.I. Ulianova in *Vospominaniia rodnykh*, p. 25; *Rabochaia Moskva,*

No. 92, April 22, 1924; and V. Valentinov, "Vstrevha Lenina s Marksizmom," *Novyi zhurnal*, LIII (1958), pp. 189–208. Valentinov recalls having heard from Lenin that he became acquainted with Marx's work in January 1889. I.I. Bliumental, in *V.I. Lenin v Samare* (Samare, 1925), says Lenin began to read *Das Kapital* in the fall of 1888 (p. 6).

36. The leading exponent of this view was Nikolai-on (N.F. Danielson), whose principal book is *Ocherki nashego poreformennogo obshchestvennogo khoziaistva* (St. Petersburg, 1893).

37. Struve's review of Nikolai-on's book, "Zur Beurtheilung der Kapitalistischen Entwickelung Russlands," *Sozialpolitisches Centralblatt*, Vol. III, No. 1, October 2, 1893, pp. 1–3, and his subsequent works of the mid-1890's. On the history of the term "populism," see my article "*Narodnichestvo:* A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review*, XXIII, No. 3 (1964), pp. 441–458 [reprinted as Chapter 5 in this book].

38. Fedoseev's manuscripts have not been published and may be lost. They are summarized in Semenov, *Revoliutsionnaia Samara*, pp. 56–57.

39. A.I. Ulianova-Elizarova in *Vospominaniia rodnykh*, p. 29.

40. V.E. Postnikov, *Iuzhno-russkoe krest-ianskoe khoziaistvo* [Moscow, 1891 (but probably beginning of 1892)]. Lenin's first extant writings of substance are his marginalia on Postnikov's book, reprinted in his *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, 5th ed., I, (Moscow, 1958), pp. 537–546, which the editors date not later than March 1893, and a review of this book, under the title "New Economic Movements in Peasant Life," written in the spring of 1893 and first published in 1923 (*Sochineniia*, I, pp. 1–49). In the autumn of 1892, Lenin delivered in Samara an oral report on Postnikov's book (Semenov, *Revoliutsionnaia Samara*, p. 65) and in 1893–1894 he entered into correspondence with P. Maslov on this subject (*Leninskii Sbornik*, XXXIII, pp. 15–19). Clearly, the book had an enormous impact on him.

41. "Po povodu tak nazyvaemogo voprosa o rynkakh," *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, I, p. 110.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 105 (written in the autumn of 1893).

43. *Leninskii Sbornik*, XXXIII, p. 16. Letter to Maslov, dated May 30, 1894.

44. Golubeva, "Iunosha Ul'ianov," p. 162; Semenov, *K Samarskomu periodu*, p. 62. V. Vodovozov, "Moe znakomstvo s Leninym," *Na chuzhoi storone*, XII (1925), pp. 174–80. See below, note 55.

45. "The era in the social development of Russia when democratism and socialism fused into one indissoluble, inseparable whole (as it had been, for example, in the era of Chernyshevskii), is gone forever. Now there is absolutely no longer any basis for this idea . . . that allegedly in Russia there is no deep, qualitative difference between the ideas of democrats and socialists. Quite the contrary: between these two ideas lies a whole gulf, and Russian socialists should have long realized this, the *inevitability* and *necessity of a full and final break with the ideas of the democrats.*" *Sochineniia*, I, pp. 170–71 (written in the summer of 1894; emphasis in the original).

46. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 194. "The Russian *worker*, leading all democratic elements, will bring down absolutism and will lead the *Russian proletariat* (together with the

proletariat of *all countries*) *by the direct road of open political struggle to the triumphant Communist Revolution.*" These words were written in the summer of 1894 (emphasis in the original).

48. Golubeva ("Poslednii karaul," *Molodaia gvardiia*, No. 2/3, 1924, pp. 30–31) held conversations with Lenin sometime between November 1891 when Lenin returned to Samara from St. Petersburg and the autumn of 1892 when she, herself, left Samara. She reports that "Lenin questioned neither the possibility nor the desirability of a power seizure, but he simply could not understand on what 'people' (*narod*) we intended to base ourselves. He began elaborately to explain that the people is not something unified and homogeneous, that it consists of classes with different interests, and so on." See also her remarks in *V.I. Lenin v Samare* (Moscow, 1933), p. 65n where she emphatically denies that Lenin was anti-Jacobin. I. Lalaiants, an associate of Fedoseev, who arrived in Samara in March 1893 detected in Lenin "certain sympathies for *Narodnaia volia* terror" and notes that this propensity caused conflicts between the two of them. I. Lalaiants, "O moikh vstrechakh s V.I. Leninym za vremia 1893–1900gg.," *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia*, No. 1 (84), 1929, p. 49. Lalaiants, it may be noted, describes Skliarenko as a full-blown Marxist (p. 44); since he does not make the same assertion about Lenin, it is likely that he did not regard him as such. As late as the autumn of 1893, when Lenin sought entrance into a circle of St. Petersburg "propagandists," he was examined thoroughly on terror and found temperamentally "too red," that is, too favorably disposed to it. (G.M. Krizhanovskii, *O Vladimire Il'iche*, Moscow, 1924, pp. 13–14). On Lenin's attacks on German Social Democratic parliamentary tactics, see M. Golubeva in *Staryi Bol'shevik*, 5 (1933), pp. 162–163.

49. See my *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885–1897* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), p. 53 and *passim*.

50. *Kriticheskie zametki k voprosu ob eknomicheskom razvitii Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1894).

51. N. Valentinov, "Iz proshlogo: P.B. Struve o Lenine," *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 8/9 (673–674), (1954), pp. 169–172. Valentinov heard Struve on this subject in 1918. A. Potresov, who knew Lenin well at this time, also recalled that in Lenin's critiques of Struve "behind the Marxist manner of expression one could discern that traditional view of developing capitalist society as a reactionary mass, an attitude characteristically underlying all revolutionary-utopian movements" ("Lenin-Versuch einer Charakterisierung," *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 11, 1927, p. 407). Struve in his recollections ("My Contacts and Conflicts with Lenin," *Slavonic Review*, July, 1934, p. 71) says that "until his very advent to power Lenin held a jump from 'Capitalism' to 'Socialism' to be utterly impossible." But this opinion is based not so much on personal impressions as on retrospective reading of Lenin's writings and is therefore unreliable.

52. Valentinov, *Ibid.*, p. 171.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 172. We know from other sources that Lenin was in correspondence with Fedoseev since 1893: I.S. Zilbershtein, "Nekotorye voprosy biografii molodogo Lenina," *Katorga i ssylka*, No. 1 (62), (1930), p. 7–23.

55. Fedoseev, *Stat'i i pisma,* p. 126: "Personally, I attach serious importance to separating from the ranks of Marxists those fools or corrupt Pharisees who, confusing capitalism with primary capitalistic accumulation, protest against all help to the village." These strictures were aimed at those who, like Lenin, refused in 1891–92 to help the starving peasants on the grounds that to do so would mean strengthening capitalism (cf. *Ibid.,* p. 176).

56. K. Tulin [V.I. Lenin], "Ekonomicheskoe soderzhanie narodnichestva i kritika ego v knige g. Struve," *Materialy dlia kharakeristiki nashego ekonomicheskogo razvitiia* (St. Petersburg, 1895), Pt. II, pp. 1–144; reprinted in Lenin, *Sochineniia,* I, pp. 223–362.

57. Valentinov, "Struve o Lenine," p. 171. Struve recorded the impression that German "capitalism" had made on him on his trip there in 1890, in an essay reprinted in his book *Na raznye temy* (St. Petersburg, 1902), p. 279.

58. *Perepiska G.V. Plekhanova i P.B. Aksel'roda,* I (Moscow, 1925), p. 271. Valentinov ("Chernyshevskii i Lenin," *Novyi Zhurnal,* No. XXVII, 1951, p. 225) attaches great importance to Akselrod's arguments in favor of collaboration with the liberals in causing Lenin to change his mind.

59. The "agitational" method was formulated by two Jewish socialists, Iu. Martov and Al, Kremer in *Ob agitatsii* (first printed in Geneva, 1896). See my *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement,* Chapter IV.

60. *Sochineniia,* I, 440, 441 (emphasis added).

61. See above, note 45.

62. See below, note 66.

63. *Sochineniia,* I, pp. 415–416.

64. *Ibid.,* p. 426.

65. *Ibid.,* p. 444.

66. *Zadachi russkikh sotsial'demokratov* (Geneva, 1898), pp. 11–12 (reprinted in *Sochineniia,* I, p. 167–190). In the introduction to the original (1898) edition of this pamphlet, Akselrod enthusiastically endorsed Lenin's stress on the bond between socialism and democracy.

67. *Teoriia i praktika angliiskogo tred-unionizma* 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1900–01). In April 1899 Lenin described the Webbs as representatives of one of the "most advanced currents of English social thought" (*Sochineniia,* II, p. 389).

68. Some historians consider "economism" to have been a polemical device invented by Plekhanov, Lenin and other Social Democrats to neutralize their opponents within the Social Democratic movement. (See for example, Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* London, 1960, pp. 33–35). Whatever the merits of the case, there can be little doubt, however, that Lenin himself was genuinely alarmed over what he considered "economist" tendencies.

69. The first editorial of this newspaper is translated in my *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement,* pp. 129–31.

70. *Ibid.,* pp. 114–115. See also Martov's recollections of Lenin's cautious initial reaction to *Rabochaia mysl'* and "economism" in Lenin, *Sochineniia,* II, pp. 585–586.

71. For example, in his introduction to *Ob agitatsii* (Geneva, 1896).

72. The text of the "Credo" (the name had been given it by Lenin's sister) can be found in "Protest rossiiskikh sotsial-demokratov," *Sochineniia,* II, pp.

477–480. Its author, E. Kuskova, describing later how this document came to be written, denied it had any programatic significance; *Byloe*, No. 10 (1906), pp. 320–330.

73. The "revisionist" controversy made itself first felt in Russia in early 1899 when S. Bulgakov took to task K. Kautsky, Lenin defended Kautsky, and Struve came out in favor of "criticism." See R. Kindersley, *The First Russian Revisionists* (Oxford, 1862).

74. Lenin's letters to Potresov, *Sochineniia*, XXVIII, p. 31. See also L. Martov, *Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata*, I (Berlin, 1922), p. 401.

75. Krupskaia, *Vospominaniia*, p. 35.

76. One of the earliest references to the need for a party newspaper is to be found in "Nasha blizhaishaia zadacha," *Sochineniia*, II, p. 499, written not later than October 1899.

77. "The improvement of revolutionary organizations and discipline, the perfecting of conspiratorial technique are urgently needed. One must openly admit that in this respect we lag behind the old Russian revolutionary parties and that we must apply all efforts to catch up and overtake them. Without an improvement of the organization, our labor movement can make no progress at all." "Nasushchnyi vopros," *Sochineniia*, II, p. 500. Written about October 1899.

78. See Lenin's revealing "Kat chut' ne potukhla Iskra," *Sochineniia*, IV, pp. 15–31.

79. D. Geyer, *Lenin in der Russischen Sozialdemokratie* (Koeln-Graz, 1962), p. 204. This monograph is an excellent study of Russian Social Democratic politics of the period with which we are concerned.

80. "Nasushchnye zadachi nashego dvizheniia," *Sochineniia*, IV, p. 55.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

84. For example, "If we really *positively* knew that the petty bourgeoisie would support the proletariat when the latter achieved its proletarian revolution, then we would have no need to speak about a 'dictatorship,' because then we would be assured of so overwhelming a majority that we could manage beautifully without the dictatorship." "Zamechaniia na proekt programmy," *Leninskii sbornik*, II, p. 80. Written in March 1902.

85. *Sochineniia*, IV, p. 67.

86. S.Iu. Witte, *Samoderzhavie i zemstvo*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1903), pp. vii–xlvii. This work was brought out by *Iskra* in accord with an arrangement made with Struve the previous year by Lenin himself. Struve had used the same approach in 1895 in his "Open Letter to Nicholas II," V. Burtsev, ed., *Za sto let, 1800–1896*, Pt. I (London, 1897), pp. 264–267.

87. "Goniteli zemstva i Annibaly liberalizma," *Sochineniia*, IV, pp. 119–157.

88. *Sochineniia*, IV, p. 577.

89. "Chto delat'?," *Sochineniia*, IV, p. 368.

90. Franz Mehring, *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, und Ferdinand Lassalle*, I–IV (Stuttgart, 1902). (Vols. I–III contain writings

from 1841–1850). That Lenin first learned the favorable opinions of Marx and Engels of the Jacobins from Mehring's editions is attested to by V.G. Revunenkov in *Marksizm i problema iakobinskoi diktatury* (Leningrad, 1966), pp. 85–85. According to Revunenkov, the anti-Jacobin views which Marx and Engels had formulated later were not known to Lenin, being first published after his death (pp. 84–84).

91. *Sochineniia*, VIII, p. 64 (written in 1905). "'Terrible words' like Jacobinism and so forth, express exactly nothing *but opportunism*," he wrote in the spring of 1904. "A Jacobin who is indissolubly bound with the *organization* of the proletariat *which has become aware* of its class interests—this is a *revolutionary Social Democrat*. A Girondist, one who longs for professors, gymnasium students, who fears the dictatorship of the proletariat, who sighs about the absolute value of democratic demands—this is an *opportunist*." *Ibid.*, VI, p. 303.

CHAPTER 7

Max Weber and Russia

I

When Max Weber published in 1906 two book-length studies of contemporary Russian politics, *Zur Lage der bürgerlichen Demokratie in Russland* (On the situation of bourgeois democracy in Russia), and *Russlands Übergang zum Scheinkonstitutionalismus* (Russia's transition to pseudo-constitutionalism), he was venturing upon a field of inquiry in which he had previously shown no interest, and which seemingly lay entirely outside the range of his professional qualifications. He was by this time widely known as an economic historian specializing in agrarian and financial problems, and in the methodology of the social sciences. True, two years earlier he had also departed from his specialty by writing on the relationship between capitalism and Protestantism, but in that instance his deviation had not been quite as radical, since these studies had concerned the economic implications of a religious movement. What could have induced him, so shortly after recuperation from a nervous breakdown which had incapacitated him for the better part of five years (1897–1902), to interrupt his academic routine, acquire a reading knowledge of Russian, and devote several months to the tedious perusal of the Russian daily press? Why did he, as his widow and biographer reports, "follow for months in breathless tension the Russian drama" of 1905?[1] Weber's interest in Russian politics, it is obvious, had deeper motives than mere fascination with current events; indeed, it was intimately connected with his two most vital concerns: the future of Germany, and the future of free society.

From the point of view of his political allegiance, Weber represented a not atypical amalgam of late nineteenth-century German nationalism and power-political inclinations, on the one hand, and democratic idealism, on the other. "I am a member of the bourgeoisie," he asserted proudly in his inauguration speech at the University of Freiburg in 1895,

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"I feel myself as such, and I am raised on its views and ideals."[2] We have it on the authority of Karl Jaspers, his friend, that Weber remained faithful throughout his life to the notions of inalienable human rights and the dignity of man.[3] Weber himself never tired of reasserting his adherence to the principles of democracy. Side by side with these beliefs, Weber openly admitted his nationalist convictions: "I have always viewed politics solely from the national standpoint," he asserted shortly before his death, "not only foreign politics, but all politics."[4] His first public act, the speech at Freiburg, was a strongly worded warning of the "dangers" facing Germany from the infiltration of Slavic peasants into Germany's eastern provinces;[5] his last were his service as German delegate to Versailles and membership in the commission drafting the constitution of the Weimar Republic in 1919–1920. Between these years lay a quarter of a century of close personal identification with German politics, during which, for all his criticism of the Hohenzollern regime, Weber never once turned his back on his country, not even at times when by its activities it had violated his deepest humanitarian convictions.

Within the German context, these different sentiments were by no means incompatible. Weber's dualism was a reflection of the split personality of German liberalism, which throughout the nineteenth century found itself torn between its nationalism, which had induced it to cooperate with such exponents of power politics as Bismarck, and its liberal goals in economics and internal politics, which had induced it to join the opposition. Criticize Bismarck as he might, Weber grew up in an atmosphere so thoroughly dominated by the ideas and personality of the Chancellor that he derived many, if not most, of the premises of his political theory from the lessons of Bismarckian politics. Above all, he derived from them the belief that power forms the essence of politics, defining politics as an interest "in power distribution, power retention, and power shifting."[6] It is for this reason that an avowed liberal such as he could select as his closest political associate Friedrich Naumann—the theorist who, by formulating the concept of Germany's *Lebensraum* in Central Europe, had helped create one of the basic doctrines of future National Socialism.

Weber's nationalism was one reason for his interest in Russian politics. Russia concerned him as Germany's most powerful neighbor and competitor, whose internal development had a direct bearing upon the future of Germany. Another reason was contained in his philosophy of history, and particularly in his views on the tendency of Western politics.

In the course of his historical researches, Weber came to the conclusion that the main tendency of European history pointed in the direction of progressive rationalization of all aspects of organized human life; the characteristic feature of Western civilization, in his eyes, was the process

of "dis-enchantment" (*Entzauberung*). This prospect frightened him, for he envisaged the likelihood of reason—once the liberator of man from the bonds of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice—becoming in turn man's new enslaver. A fully rationalized society would deprive man of his freedom and reduce him to the condition of a powerless cog in a virtually indestructible machine. Weber's dread of the ultimate triumph of the principle of rationality can be explained only by the fact that his faith in the omnipotence of reason was matched by an equally firm attachment to the ideals of freedom and individualism.

These philosophical considerations stimulated Weber's interest in Russia, because Russia appeared to him a country whose culture was only in its formative stage; it could, therefore, if its development were to proceed in a certain way, offset the growing tendency toward the suppression of human freedom which appeared to him the logical outcome of the course of European history. If his first interest was frankly subjective in its motivation, the latter was meant to be entirely dispassionate and free of national prejudices. One of the difficulties in analyzing Weber's thought on political subjects lies in the fact that it operates on two distinct levels: at one time, Weber speaks as a German politician, interested in enhancing the power and prestige of his nation, and at another time as a detached scholar, viewing events *sub specie aeternitatis*. Both of these mutually exclusive attitudes are in evidence in his Russian studies, and unfortunately the lines separating them are not as clear as Weber, fully conscious of this ambivalence, might have desired. Apparently thought and life could not be as strictly separated as the Neo-Kantian school, by which Weber was strongly influenced, had presupposed.

From the political point of view, Weber divided society into three main groups: the group which holds the reins of power, the group which carries out the desires of those in power, and the subjects. The specific feature of all political bodies is the exercise of power. "All political formations are formations of violence."[7] Actual authority in every society, including one organized on democratic principles, rests in the hands of an elite: "The 'principle of the small number," i.e., the superior political maneuverability of *small* leading groups, always dominates political activity. This 'Caesarian' stigma is ineradicable (in *mass states*)."[8] One of the most important criteria of a sound political organism is the extent to which this ruling elite is also economically ascendant. In a viable state, the material interests of the group which exercises political power coincide with the interests of the majority of the population and this interdependence is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of all the citizens. The group holding power must, in addition to economic power, also possess a well-developed power instinct, a *Machtwille*, which is not

mechanically engendered by economic circumstances (as the Marxists would have it), but is slowly produced by zealous cultivation and continuous testing. It was very likely the lesson learned from the defeats suffered by the German liberals at the hands of the Junkers which led Weber to remark: "The ultimate substance of the *socio*-political problem is not the question of the *economic* status of those who are ruled, but much more so one of the *political* qualification of the *ruling and emergent* classes."[9] Political movements which lack these qualities are not likely to succeed, regardless of the number of their followers, the caliber of their leadership, and the soundness of their program.

To exercise its authority effectively, that is, to impose its will, the ruling group needs a certain measure of acquiescence on the part of the subjects. "A definite minimum of *wanting* to obey, that is, of *interest* (external and internal) in obeying, must exist in every genuine ruler-ruled relationship (*Herrrschaftsverhältniss*)."[10] This acquiescence is essentially a matter of faith: "The basis of every authority, that is, of every subordination, is a *faith*: 'prestige'-faith in favor of the one or more who rule."[11] From the point of view of *type* of acquiescence which they secure, Weber divided all political systems into three principal categories: charismatic, in which the relationship between the rulers and subjects is based upon a non-rational "recognition" of the former by the latter; traditional, which gains obedience on the grounds of legitimacy and precedent; and, finally, rational—the modern European type—which obtains popular recognition through representation, referendum, and other legally formalized means. The rationally organized political system also uses for the purpose of securing mass approval of its actions the institution of the parliament:

> The modern parliaments are in the first place representative bodies of those who are *ruled* by means of the bureaucracy. A certain minimum of inner approval, at least on the part of the socially weighty layers of the subjects, is a prerequisite for the permanence of every, even the best organized, regime (*Herrschaft*). The parliaments are today the means of outwardly manifesting this minimum of acquiescence.[12]

It is not far-fetched to suppose that Weber's opinion of the limited functions of parliaments—like his whole scepticism concerning democratic legislation—was derived from the history of the Reichstag, which, in spite of its theoretically extensive legislative powers, had proved at all critical junctures in German history to be a malleable instrument in the hands of the crown and its ministers. Weber felt, however, that no matter how much parliaments were restricted in influencing the actual course of politics, they were indispensable to modern non-charismatic, non-

traditional mass states as the only *continuous* means of eliciting popular approval of governmental actions; one might render parliaments harmless, as Bismarck had done, but one could not dispense with them altogether.[13]

In addition to a minimum of acquiescence on the part of their subjects, the rulers also need an apparatus through which to carry out their decisions. Weber's great contribution to political science lies in his thorough analysis of the administrative aspects of sovereignty, and in his emphasis on the political powers exercised in most societies by the ostensibly purely instrumental officialdom. Where most political thinkers, operating within the framework erected by the medieval jurists, saw the substance of the political problem in the relationship between the sovereign and his subjects, Weber, as a sociologist interested more in political practice than in legal theory, emphasized the third factor, the apparatus of administration. Each of the three types of political authority has its proper administrative system. In societies based on the charismatic principle, this function is performed by "men of trust": apostles, divinely inspired deputies of the leader, who convey his will to the subjects directly, without recourse to a permanent apparatus. Of course, such a system of administration is uncommon and by its very nature short-lived. In societies in which the prevalent type of authority is traditional, the officialdom—such as the hereditary nobility—consists of "servants" of the ruler; it lacks specific training for its duties and has no professional hierarchy. When such officials become subjected to a regular course of training and are transformed into a body of full-time salaried employees rated according to their skill and length of service, they become a bureaucracy in the proper sense of the word. Bureaucracy is the system of administration proper to political authority based upon the rational principle, such as prevails in modern Europe.

If Weber devoted in his political writings a disproportionate amount of attention to the bureaucracy, it was because he considered it to be the central problem of modern politics. The emergence and spread of bureaucracies in the contemporary political machineries appeared to him an intrinsic part of the whole process of rationalization of Western life; it had its counterparts in industry, the army, political parties, and educational institutions. To Weber the state was an "enterprise" (*Betrieb*), and subject to the very same laws as any other enterprise. "The modern state, seen from the point of view of social science, is an 'enterprise,' exactly like a factory: this is precisely its historically specific quality."[14] Hence he stressed the administrative aspect of politics and tended to discount ideology: "We late men of the West have become sceptics," he once wrote. "Ideological systems shall no longer confuse us. Programs belong to the previous century."[15] The bureaucrat, as an administrator with a thorough knowledge of all the intricacies of his profession, was

vastly superior from the point of view of efficiency to any other type of civil servant. Assuming the inevitability of rationalization of Western society, the complete bureaucratization of all social institutions was virtually inescapable:

> The future belongs to bureaucratization. . . . Where once the modern trained official rules, his power is virtually indestructible, because the whole organization of the most basic provisions of life is fashioned to suit his performance.[16]

Neither capitalism nor socialism was in a position to reverse this trend, since they, too, were succumbing to bureaucratization. Modern capitalism was thoroughly rationalized, and the business bureaucrats who administered it were not even remotely related to the individual entrepreneurs active during the early period of the capitalist system. The prospects for socialism were even more discouraging. The socialist state, by assuming ever greater social and economic responsibilities, would require a bureaucratic apparatus much larger than the capitalist one. Furthermore, by destroying the capitalist entrepreneur who managed somehow to survive even under modern conditions, socialism would eliminate the *only* relatively efficacious rival of the bureaucrat: the only individual who knows his business better than the professional civil servant. Hence, Weber asserted, "growing 'socialization' today means unavoidably also growing bureaucratization."[17] Weber repeatedly criticized the Marxists for ignoring what to him seemed the central problem facing socialism: *who* will operate the nationalized enterprises? As for himself, he felt certain that this function would be assumed by the groups technically best-prepared for the task, that is, the bureaucracy, "from which nothing is further removed than [a sense of] solidarity with the proletariat."[18]

All these considerations led Weber to the pessimistic conclusion:

> . . . the edifice for the new bondage stands everywhere in readiness. . . . All the *economic* weather signs point in the direction of diminishing freedom. . . . "Against the current" of the material constellations are we "individualists" and party followers of "democratic" institutions. He who desires to be the weather vane of a "tendency of development" had better abandon these old-fashioned ideals as quickly as possible.[19]

The extent to which Weber dreaded the bureaucracy may be gauged from the fact that in one of his speeches on the political situation in Germany, he asserted that the American and French civil services were

in the long run more beneficial to their countries than their German counterparts because they were more corruptible![20]

Only a dynamic, politically ambitious, and economically expanding social class could stem the tide of bureaucratic control, but such a class was missing from twentieth-century Europe. Political power in Europe was held by classes whose economic status was declining, while the proletariat, the only serious contender, lacked the "power instinct" (at least in Germany). The "dictatorship of the masses" which labor idealized pointed, in Weber's opinion, not to genuine popular rule, but to the dictatorship of individuals.[21] Europe, therefore, lacked a class able and willing to assume the responsibilities of political leadership; and, as a result, authority passed by default into the hands of the bureaucracy.

Under existing conditions, Weber thought that only a political system with a strong executive, preferably a monarch, and a strong parliament, both sharing control of the patronage, could keep the bureaucracy in check. The essence of the constitutional problem in the twentieth century was not the division of power between the legislative and executive organs of the state, much less the degree of popular control over the government, but the extent to which the executive and legislative could cooperate for the purpose of keeping at bay their common enemy, the civil service.

Surveying the European political scene at the beginning of the century from these premises, Weber had every reason for despair. Everything pointed to further decline in human freedom, and to the triumph of a ruthlessly efficient and practically indestructible—because rational—system of social organization.

If there was any hope for the preservation of liberty—in the broadest sense of the word—it lay outside Europe, in the United States and, above all, in Russia, where the conditions were still propitious for the emergence of new civilizations. It is difficult to overestimate the importance which Weber attached to the developments taking place in these two countries. The fate of Russia was of especial interest to him, partly because Russian culture was less "European" than that of America, and partly because developments in Russia were of more direct concern to Germany's international position. When the news of strikes and disorders spreading throughout the Russian Empire reached him, Weber immediately suspended his usual scholarly pursuits and immersed himself body and soul in the "Russian drama." At stake, he felt, was the fate of humanity itself: what was not gained for the cause of the individual and his freedoms during the period of economic chaos in countries in which the economic system had not yet become fully crystallized might perhaps never be won "once the world has become economically 'full' and intellectually 'satiated.' . . . these are, in a certain sense, indeed,

perhaps the 'last' opportunities for the construction of 'free' cultures 'from the ground up.'"[22] The second impetus for Weber's Russian studies thus stemmed directly from his philosophy of history. He reacted to the Russian Revolution of 1905 with the hope that it might be the harbinger of a new social and political order which would break the fetters strangling Western man and point the way to the rebirth of the free society.

II

Weber's first study dealing with Russia, *Zur Lage der bürgerlichen Demokratie in Russland,* which he completed in February 1906, was written with the assistance of Bogdan Kistiakovskii, a Russian liberal active in the *Soiuz Osvobozhdzheniia* (Union of Liberation). Its historical background—whatever there is of it—is derived principally from Leroy-Beaulieu's *Empire of the Tsars and the Russians.* In this study Weber analyzed at length the social composition and programs of the principal Russian liberal groups, in order to ascertain the nature of Russian liberalism and the prospects for its success.

Weber proceeds from the assumption that nothing in Russia is "historical" except the peasant commune, the church, and the monarchy.[23] Consequently, he ignores the whole tradition of Russian liberal thought, the roots of which may be traced back well into the eighteenth century, and begins his account with 1903–04—the years when the middle-of-the-road elements working in the zemstvos united with the liberal intelligentsia to form the League of Liberation. His analysis starts with the events immediately preceding the establishment of the League, and then proceeds to the zemstvo movement, stressing particularly the relations between these twin pillars of liberalism and the two most dynamic classes of the population, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Weber's approach to the whole problem, his choice of evidence, and his emphasis are all conditioned by his political philosophy; he concentrates his attention on the "values" of Russian liberalism and on the extent to which it receives the backing of economically ascendant interests, on the assumption that such values and such support are necessary for the success of any political movement aspiring to power.

Weber's general conclusion to the main problems posed by his inquiry is negative: Russian liberalism lacks the support of groups materially interested in the realization of its goals, and its ideals are in many respects outdated.

The events of the 1905 Russian Revolution indicated to Weber that the bourgeoisie in Russia did not support the liberal forces, as represented by the zemstvos and the Kadet party. To begin with, the zemstvos were

not genuinely middle-class institutions, that is, middle-class in the economic sense of the word: insofar as the bourgeoisie was represented in them at all, it was as a "general way of life and a level of education. . . . Viewed economically, the zemstvo liberals were on the whole 'non-interested parties,' hence bearers of a political and socio-political idealism. . . . "[24] The bourgeoisie, in the proper sense of the word, that is, the class of large industrialists and financiers, not only refused to assist these idealists, but actively opposed their cause. The break between the upper bourgeoisie and the zemstvo liberals, which had occurred early in the 1905 Revolution, was an outward manifestation of this rift. A far more encouraging aspect of zemstvo activity was to Weber the development of a zemstvo officialdom, the so-called "third element": the idealism and devotion of this official category, "which really lives 'among and with the people,' represent the ethically most encouraging and significant [phenomena] of today's Russia."[25] (Weber apparently had in mind the development of a grass-roots bureaucracy, capable of providing the anti-autocratic forces with the requisite administrative personnel.) Bourgeois support was also withheld from the other mainstay of Russian liberalism, the Kadet party. The roster of the Kadet party contained no names of persons prominent in the industrial and financial circles of the country. The manufacturers and bankers preferred to join the conservative Octobrists, and sided on all decisive issues with the crown and bureaucracy against the liberals. As for the petty bourgeoisie, it was prevented from making common cause with the liberals by its anti-Semitism, enrolling instead in the ranks of the arch-reactionary Black Hundreds.

What was then left as a possible socio-economic basis for Russian liberalism? Only the peasantry. Some libertarian circles in Russia, notably the Socialists Revolutionaries, placed much hope on the emergence of Russian democracy on the foundation of peasant institutions, such as the commune. Weber considered this notion a sheer illusion, because he was convinced that such "romantic populism" would with time be undermined by capitalist forces, and give way to Marxism.[26] The peasants, in Weber's opinion, hindered rather than helped the development of Russian liberalism, by confronting it with an enormously complex economic problem which could not be solved without upsetting the entire social order. The peasants were basically anti-parliamentarian, desiring to deal directly with the Tsar and striving for the confiscation of land, and this striving the liberals must willy-nilly support in order to be consistent with their own egalitarian principles, although it was fundamentally anarchistic and economically retrogressive. Indeed, Weber saw no way at all in which the agrarian difficulties of Russia could be solved by democratic means: "The party which wants to carry out this

[agrarian] reform in a *legal* manner, is not to be envied its task."[27] The Russian peasants would probably not ally themselves with the nobles to form a united anti-liberal front, as they had done in Germany; but they certainly would not cooperate with the liberals, either.

The cleavage between the liberals and the economically influential classes of Russian society—the general absence of a socioeconomic basis in the liberal movement—was a shortcoming which pointed to the eventual failure of the whole cause of liberalism in Russia. Weber fervently cautioned against the optimism which encouraged many Russians to believe that regardless of the difficulties which democracy encountered in their country, its ultimate triumph was assured by the sheer force of historical progress. The spread of Western culture and capitalist economy did not, *ipso facto*, guarantee that Russia would also acquire the liberties which had accompanied their emergence in European history. In the first place, European liberty had been born in unique, perhaps unrepeatable, circumstances, at a time when both the intellectual and the material conditions for it were exceptionally propitious. It was a period of firm adherence to the principles of divine authority and the harmony of human interests—principles which since then had been undermined by Enlightenment and capitalism, respectively. It was also a time of overseas expansion and of unlimited opportunities for the individual capitalist entrepreneur. "These phases of development cannot be repeated in today's Russia, if only for 'ideal' reasons: the specifically bourgeois individualism is being overcome already within the classes of 'education and property,' and will certainly prove unable to win over the 'petty bourgeoisie.'"[28] In the second place, it was erroneous to ascribe to the advanced capitalism of the modern world, as practiced in the West, qualities of affinity with democracy and freedom, when, indeed, the question was: how, in the long run, are democracy and freedom possible under its rule?[29]

Although Weber was in general pessimistic about the prospects of Russian liberalism, he did not altogether discount its accomplishments. He called zemstvo liberalism "a splendid movement," comparing its role to that of the Frankfurt Parliament; it was a manifestation of "pure" liberalism. The zemstvos, he felt, could best serve the democratic cause by devoting themselves to the task of spreading among all the strata of Russian society the idea of inalienable human rights, in order to counteract the pernicious influence of both bureaucratism and Jacobinism. (By Jacobinism, Weber most likely meant Leninism, to which, in a note to the essay, he referred as the "Jacobin" tendency within the Russian Social Democratic movement.[30]) Under modern conditions this was a vital task. With all the social forces conspiring against human liberty, the *desire* to be free was the last weapon available to man: democracy

and freedom were possible only "where behind them stands continuously the determined *will* of a nation not to allow itself to be ruled like a flock of sheep."[31] Nor were all the sacrifices of the Revolution in vain. It was true that the monarchy had weathered the latest upheaval, and had retained the support of the army, the central bureaucracy, and some powerful social classes; as a matter of fact, Weber was convinced, "only an unlucky *European* war would definitively shatter the autocracy."[32] It was equally true that the efforts of the democratic forces had failed, and that Russia was now confronted with a regime in which the bureaucracy could dominate the country under the guise of a pseudo-constitutional system. But in the long run such a system could not prevail, and the country faced the prospect of continuous social upheavals.[33]

Several months after the appearance of his first essay on Russia, Weber published a second, longer study on the same subject: *Russia's Transition to Pseudo-constitutionalism.*[34] If in the first work he had approached Russian political life from the point of view of the development of liberal forces, now, having convinced himself of the liberals' weakness, he concentrated his attention on the tsarist regime and its machinery, for the purpose of evaluating the possibility of Russia's transformation into a Western parliamentary democracy from above, rather than from below. The tone of the second essay is cooler, more detached, more professional, than that of its predecessor. It was written by a man who, having been disappointed in his great expectations, approached the whole subject of Russian politics *sine ira et studio.*

The key to the behavior of the tsarist government during the 1905 Revolution, and the reason for the concessions granted in the October Manifesto and promulgated in the Fundamental Laws, lay, according to Weber, in the foreign indebtedness of Russia:

> In order to understand the conduct of the Russian government, it is essential to keep in mind the fact that Russia is a debtor state. It is quite correct, as the reactionaries assert, that the "Jews" have extorted, smuggled, or fabricated the Russian Constitution; but naturally these Jews are not the terribly oppressed inhabitants of the Russian ghettos, but their partly ennobled cousins of the *haute finance* in Berlin and Paris, who are entrusted with control over the issues of Russian government bonds.[35]

For the sake of these foreign creditors, whom the disorders of 1905 had thrown into a state of panic, tsarism had to introduce the semblance of a constitutional regime and reach some sort of compromise with the domestic bourgeoisie. The main purpose of these measures was to create abroad the impression of internal stability and order, and in this manner

to stimulate the flow of foreign loans and investments. In fact, however, the tsarist regime had not the slightest intention of granting the Russians any civic and political rights, and its main internal concern was the preservation of the extensive powers of the police bureaucracy. Thus, the government was compelled to conduct a dual policy: outwardly, it acted as a constitutional monarchy; internally, it retained the old system of arbitrary rule by the police.

The main subject of Weber's essay is the analysis of the 1906 Constitution from these premises. He approached the constitution from both the theoretical and the practical points of view, that is, how the new system was supposed to have worked, and how it actually did work. He analyzed at length the functions of the new ministerial body, the powers of the Russian legislature, the electoral law, and the role of the bureaucracy, stressing in each instance the limitations of the new arrangement, and the loopholes through which the anti-parliamentarian forces could reduce the opposition to impotence. Much of Weber's criticism was borne out by subsequent events: the inability of the Duma to assert positive leadership, the survival of the arbitrary rule of the police, the absence of a true cabinet. To Weber, the new system was not a genuine constitutional one, because it lacked the division of authority between the chief executive and a political party in control of the parliament which he considered the essential feature of the constitutional system.[36] It was rather a "pseudo-constitutional" system. This term Weber applied not only to Russia, but also to contemporary Germany,[37] as descriptive of a regime in which the population, as represented by parties in the parliament, possessed not a share of political power, but only its appurtenances.

The arrangement of 1906 had, in Weber's opinion, two important and lasting effects: it increased the power of the Russian bureaucracy, and decreased that of the crown. The pre-1905 regime in Russia had been autocratic in name only; in fact, the country had been divided into numerous satrapies, which fought one another and the Tsar. The old system, by its very inefficiency, had created many avenues of escape from the clutches of the administration.[38] The October Manifesto had put an end to this state of affairs; it signified the demise of the old regime of overlapping authority, decentralized administrative apparatus, and competing institutions, and marked the definitive introduction of the centralized rule of the modern bureaucracy. Headed by the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers—"that mighty trust of bureaucratic interests"—both entirely independent of the Duma, the bureaucracy now wedged itself between the monarch and the population. The Tsar retained only veto powers, and in all matters of administration became dependent on the ministerial body, which had gathered into its hands all the strands

of effective political authority. The 1906 Constitution represented, in effect, "the definitive bureaucratical rationalization of the autocracy in the entire sphere of domestic politics."[39] Its net result was the *shift of power from the crown to the bureaucracy.* Had the Tsar permitted the creation of a genuine parliamentary system, he would have been able to retain more authority, because he would then have been in a position to compel the bureaucracy to side with him against the legislature. By divesting the Duma of authority, he had ceded to the officials that political power which he had refused to yield to the population at large. In the long run, the principal loser was the Tsar:

> . . . as "flattery is homage paid by vice to virtue," so is the explicit codification of such a profoundly ungenuine pseudo-constitutionalism an equally profoundly degrading "obeisance of the idea of autocracy to the constitutional principle"; it harms, in the long run, not the respect due this principle, but the authority of the crown. . . .[40]

The 1906 constitutional arrangement, being backed only by the bureaucracy and the wealthiest elements of the bourgeoisie, and rejected by all the other classes of the population, would result in a conflict between the regime and society, and lead to chronic civil wars.

Weber's researches had thus convinced him that it was vain to look to Russia for new forms of civilization, and that his visions of the emergence there of "a free culture from the ground up"—although precisely *how* he had expected this to be done he had never made explicit—had been unfounded. In Russia, as elsewhere, power was passing into the hands of the bureaucracy. The 1905–1906 events in Russia indicated that this country had entered "on the path of the specifically European development."[41] This fact might have encouraged some friends of Russian freedom, but not Weber, because to him freedom, under modern conditions, was possible only *outside* European culture. Disappointed, Weber abandoned his studies of Russian politics. Henceforth, his views on Russia became progressively less influenced by cultural and philosophical considerations, and ever more colored by his German nationalism. While it is certainly unfair to accuse Weber of "Russophobia,"[42] it is nevertheless true that after 1906 he displayed a tendency to judge the internal and external policies of Russia from the point of view of their bearing on German political interests. This approach, in turn, led him—in political matters, at any rate—to assume an anti-Russian position.

Weber spelled out the reasons for his change of attitude toward Russia in the course of a speech delivered in October 1916 on the subject, "Germany Among the European World Powers."[43] He had been critical

all along of the foreign policies pursued by Wilhelm II, on the grounds that they were unrealistic and imposed upon Germany tasks which, owing to its peculiar geopolitical situation, it could not fulfill. In this speech Weber continued his criticism of the German regime and, in words as pointed as possible under the conditions of wartime censorship, indicated the disastrous consequences which the continuation of such policies could entail for the entire future of the German state. His main argument ran as follows: Germany is the only world power situated in the center of a continent and surrounded by other world powers. This unique position makes it necessary for Germany to have allies; it is the only state among those engaged in the conduct of world politics which cannot dispense with the assistance, or at least friendship, of other such states. In its quest for allies, Germany's choice lies between the West, as represented by England and France, and the East, as represented by Russia. Faced with this alternative, Germany must turn to the West. Russia is the natural enemy of Germany because: (1) Russia's population is constantly growing, while that of the Western countries is declining; (2) Russia is compelled by its land-starved peasantry to expand; and, finally, (3) Russia's interests are in conflict with those of Austria-Hungary and Turkey, upon whom Germany relies in its Balkan and Near Eastern activities. On these grounds, Weber advised the Germans to transcend their emotions and halt the campaign aimed at stirring up hatred of England. Nothing could be more disastrous than to alienate Britain and France beyond all possibility of reconciliation. Deprived of Western sympathies, postwar Germany would be left completely at the mercy of Russia.

It is characteristic of Weber's political thought that in these remarks, despite their pointedly anti-Russian conclusion, there was no dislike of Russia as such. Weber tried to keep moral and emotional elements out of his considerations, and to arrive at his conclusions solely on the basis of cold calculation. What concerned him as an avowed *Realpolitiker* was the question: who could offer Germany more? His attitude toward Russia was determined entirely by this consideration.

The outbreak of the Revolution in Russia prompted Weber once more to turn his attention to the internal developments in that country. On April 26, 1917, he published in the journal *Hilfe*, edited by Friedrich Naumann, an article entitled "Russlands Übergang zur Scheindemokratie" (Russia's transition to pseudo-democracy), which was devoted to an analysis of the March Revolution.[44] The principal purpose of this somewhat hastily written essay was to indicate the possible impact of the Russian coup on Germany, and particularly on Germany's war effort.

Why, Weber inquired at the outset, did the Revolution of 1917 succeed whereas that of 1905 had failed? The answer lay in the behavior of the

bourgeoisie, which controls the credit indispensable for the success of revolutions. In 1905, the middle class had supported the monarchy; in 1917, after another decade of rule by an arbitrary police and an irresponsible sovereign, it turned against the monarchy. Already during the war the most conservative elements of Russian society, driven to desperation by the Tsar's meddling and incompetence, had come out in favor of a parliamentary system. Had the bourgeoisie remained loyal to the regime, the Revolution of 1917 would probably also have been eventually suppressed. Only Stolypin, with his strong leadership, had saved the Tsar from meeting his fate earlier.

Weber considered the Provisional Government in the first month of its existence to be an uneasy condominium shared by the conservatively inclined bourgeoisie and its equally conservative allies: the officer corps, the state bureaucracy, and the domestic as well as foreign moneylenders, on the one hand, and the radical intelligentsia, representing the genuinely democratic forces, on the other. This condominium was made possible by a temporary community of interests of the two groups, but was not likely to last, because their fundamental aspirations were quite divergent. The bourgeoisie had lent its support to the democratic forces only to get rid of an interfering monarch, not to introduce any far-reaching changes into the Russian political system. The interests of the bourgeoisie required the continuation of the war and the suppression of the democratic forces; the former to safeguard its investments and to secure foreign loans, the latter to prevent the powerful anti-proprietary sentiments of the masses of the Russian population from prevailing in the legislative organs of the state. The ideal of the middle classes was a "strong man," preferably a military dictator, capable of assuring these ends.

To retain control of the country until it was firmly in the saddle, the bourgeoisie needed the support of the radical intelligentsia, represented by the SR's and SD's, because the latter had at their disposal the means of transportation and communication such as the railroads and telegraphs, as well as contact with the masses through the rural bureaucracy, which was largely socialist in its sympathies. It was as a concession to these anti-monarchistic groups that the middle classes agreed to the complete removal of the Romanov dynasty, instead of replacing Nicholas II with a "citizen king" or a military dictator, as would have been more consistent with their own desires. The admission of the radicals into the cabinet also lent the new regime a revolutionary coloring without affecting in the least the hold of the conservatives on the machinery of the state.

The fatal weakness of the radicals was lack of both capital and credit, without which they could neither make a revolution of their own liking, nor shoulder the responsibilities of government. As a consequence they had to cooperate with the bourgeoisie, and content themselves with the

miserable role of "fellow travelers" (*Mittläufer*) of an essentially anti-democratic regime.

A further cause of instability of the Provisional Government was the incompatibility of interests between the bourgeoisie and the most numerous social group in Russia, the peasantry. The peasants—both in and out of uniform—desired above all the prompt confiscation of large landed estates, and this in turn required the speedy termination of the war, with its concomitant, demobilization. Thus arose a social conflict which threatened the survival of the Provisional Government; whereas the middle classes desired the preservation of the status quo in matters of property and political structure, as well as the continuation of the war, the peasantry strove for radical alterations in the existing property relationships, the democratizations of the government, and the conclusion of the war. Thwarted in its endeavors by the bourgeoisie, the peasantry could well seek violent solutions:

> These difficulties could be removed only by means of a social revolutionary *dictatorship* of many years' duration (under "social revolutionary" is to be understood not some kind of a savage, but simply a politician who pays no attention to the—altogether young in Russia—[concept of] "holiness" of private landed property). Whether personalities for this task are available, I do not know. But they can win lasting power only if *peace* is concluded most speedily. *Because only then would the peasants be within the country at all and stand available.*[45]

The democratic intelligentsia was thus caught in a vise between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, each of which desired the establishment of a different kind of dictatorship. Weber thought it unlikely that the third major social force, the industrial proletariat, could serve democratic purposes, because its essentially anti-peasant interests made it dependent on the bourgeoisie; the workers could obtain greater concessions from a middle-class regime than from a peasant-dominated Constituent Assembly.

From all these observations, Weber concluded that as of mid-April 1917 Russia had not undergone a genuine revolution: "What has occurred so far is not a 'revolution' but a mere 'elimination' of an incompetent monarch."[46] As soon as the bourgeoisie had obtained sufficient credits abroad, it could be expected to eject the liberals from the administration, and put an end to all democratic sham. Unless Russia underwent a second coup, its basic policies would probably remain the same as they had been before 1917. Hence, the war against Russia must continue without letup, unslackened by any illusions about Russia's "revolution" or "democratization." Weber especially cautioned the leaders of German

Social Democracy not to be misled by the appearances of Russia's change, and gave an early expression to the "stab in the back" myth:

> . . . [the] attitude of the Russian socialist leaders rests upon one fundamental assumption: namely, that now, when an army of Negroes, Ghurkas, and all the barbarian scum of the earth stands on our borders, half mad with fury, thirst for revenge, and the desire to lay waste our land—the German Social Democracy will still perhaps allow itself to play along with the swindle of the contemporary Russian Duma plutocracy, and will launch a moral attack from the rear on the German Army, which protects our land from the savages. . . . It is essential that the German working class *know* the fact and the reason why for the time being there can be not the slightest doubt about the absence of any genuine "democracy" in Russia. With a *truly* democratic Russia, we could conclude an honorable peace at any time. With the present one, presumably *not;* because its rulers need the war for the sake of their power status.[47]

It is not difficult to perceive in these arguments a restatement of the contention which Weber had first made in 1906, when he had analyzed the prospects of Russian liberalism. Now, as then, he maintained that genuine democracy in Russia was unlikely because of the conflict between those who possessed the *means* for the establishment of democracy and those who, for material or idealistic reasons, had an *interest* in democracy.

In November 1917 the Provisional Government collapsed, and power passed into the hands of a small group of extreme radical intellectuals, leaning on part of the industrial proletariat and the army, and not on the peasantry, as Weber had anticipated. Weber discussed the new Bolshevik regime on two separate occasions: once in February 1918, in a newspaper article dealing with the contemporary European political situation, and then again in July 1918, in the course of a speech on socialism delivered in Vienna to a group of army officers.[48] The Bolshevik regime appeared to him a "pure military dictatorship" of corporals:

> It is pure nonsense to foster the impression that in back of it stand "class-conscious" proletarian masses of a Western European type. Behind it stands a *soldier* proletariat. This has its consequences. Whatever goals the Petersburg littérateurs may pursue, their power apparatus: the soldiers, awaits and demands above all *reward* and *loot.* This decides about everything. . . . The well-paid Red Guards have no interest whatsoever in peace, which will deprive them of their earnings. Neither do the soldiers who, under the pretext of "liberation" of the Ukraine, Finland, and other regions, break in, and (as in Russia proper) impose contributions. The only authority in Russia established by means of a democratic—at least in form—election, the Constituent Assembly, has been destroyed by force. Not because of

> a major difference of views—its strongest party declared itself in favor of keeping the armistice and continuing the peace negotiations. But in order to prevent new providers from assisting other bodyguards, employees, and troop detachments with wages and loot. It is the purest militarism which exists at the present time anywhere. Everything else is, objectively, a swindle, whatever goals the management pretends to have, or perhaps really sincerely has.[49]

In his July speech, Weber elaborated further his misgivings about the stability and intentions of the Bolshevik regime. The main topic of the lecture was socialism. After characterizing Marxist socialism as a protest against the—to Weber, inevitable—alienation of the industrial worker from the means of production, Weber reiterated his scepticism concerning the ability of the proletariat to attain genuine control over the state and its economy:

> Certainly: it is possible that in the course of a war, with the fabulous overturns which it brings, and as a result of the fate which the worker suffers, especially as a result of hunger, the mass of the proletariat . . . may, under the leadership of such intellectuals, seize power. . . . But I do not perceive the forces for the direction of production during peacetime either among the trade unionists or among the syndicalist intellectuals. The great experiment is now Russia.[50]

Recent information from Russia indicated, Weber continued, that piece wages had been brought back, and the old entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, and tsarist army officers had been rehired. "But one cannot permanently run the state machine and the economy in this fashion, and so far the experiment is not too encouraging."[51] Indeed, Weber expressed surprise that the Bolshevik regime had survived as long as it had, and ascribed its survival to the fact that the regime was less a socialist one than a "military dictatorship of corporals." Weber concluded his remarks about Soviet Russia with an assertion that Trotsky was mistaken in expecting the German Army to fall apart under the impact of Communist propaganda, because two-thirds of this army consisted of peasants and a considerable proportion of petty bourgeois, that is, of class which would be only too glad to help subdue the industrial proletariat. But he warned his listeners not to underestimate the purely emotional appeal of socialism, and expressed approval of the Brest Litovsk negotiations, on the grounds that they exposed the real intentions of the Bolsheviks: "With fighters for a faith one cannot conclude peace—one can only render them harmless. . . . "[52]

The collapse of Germany in November 1918 came to Weber as no surprise; it was the fruit of years of irresponsible saber-rattling and

adventurism, against which he had often warned his compatriots. He consoled himself, however, with the thought that perhaps not all the sacrifices which Germany had made in the course of the war had been made in vain:

> The self-discipline of truth naturally compels us to admit: the *world* political role of Germany is done for: the Anglo-Saxon world domination—"*Ah, c'est nous qui l'avons faite,*" as Thiers said to Bismarck of our unity. It *is* most unpleasant, but: something much worse—the *Russian* knout!—was turned away by *us*. This glory is ours. American world domination was as unavoidable as in antiquity that of Rome following the Punic War. It is to be hoped that it shall *remain* thus, that it shall not be shared with Russia. *This* is for me the goal of our future world policy, because the Russian danger is suppressed only for now, not forever.[53]

III

How, in the light of nearly half a century of historical retrospect, do the analyses and appraisals of Russian political developments made by a thinker widely recognized as the greatest of modern sociologists stand up against the test of history? It is true that Weber repeatedly denied any intention to predict. "'History' cannot serve us as a prelude to the almost immediate present," he wrote at the beginning of his essay on the Russian constitution, "because we cannot know what will last. The question is one of retaining the essential and characteristic as they appear *at the moment.*" But, regardless of his disclaimers, Weber did in fact predict; indeed, the main purpose of his three principal essays on Russia was to chart the probable future. It is not unfair, therefore, to confront his prognostications with the facts as they are known today, not so much perhaps to judge Weber's accomplishment as to obtain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of his political method.

The basic premises from which Weber approached Russian politics were derived from his conviction that Western civilization was moving inexorably toward ever greater rationalization of all aspects of organized life, and that this process led, in the realm of politics, to the transformation of the state into an "enterprise," with the attendant passage of all real power into the hands of the professional civil service. Weber found support for this thesis in the evolution of modern Germany, and he tended therefore to pattern his views on institutions and political processes on the German experience. It is there that we must look for the sources of his belief in the impotence of popular will, his extremely narrow conception of the scope and function of parliamentary institutions, his emphasis on the "manipulative," "elite" aspects of government, his

contempt for non-professional politicians and exaggerated fear of all bureaucracy (the German *Beamtentum*), his insistence on the necessity of political leadership being combined with economic ascendancy, and, finally, his whole notion of politics as an "exercise of power." All these concepts Weber applied to Russian politics of the critical revolutionary periods of 1905–1906 and 1917–1918 with results which, on the whole, were not satisfactory.

The transition from the old decentralized, inefficient autocratic regime to the modern rational system of government by bureaucracy, which, by a process of deduction from more general principles, Weber came to regard as the main consequence of the 1906 Constitution, simply never occurred. On the contrary. During the final decade of its existence, the tsarist government became ever more chaotic and decentralized. Not a small measure of responsibility for this development must be assigned to the Tsar, Nicholas II, who, by his constant interference in administrative affairs, prevented able and loyal bureaucratic servants like Witte and Stolypin from providing the country with a more efficient government. The authority which the Tsar himself proved unable or unwilling to exercise was arrogated not by the bureaucracy but by the Empress and her favorite, Rasputin; they, in turn, through the appointment of ineffective Prime Ministers like Goremykin and Stürmer, and through their constant intrigues, completed the disorganization of the old bureaucratic apparatus. Between 1906 and 1917, the Russian bureaucracy neither usurped the authority of the crown, nor attempted to do so.[54] It did its very best to serve the monarchy, but it became so thoroughly demoralized by the crown's irresponsible behavior that in March 1917, when the dynasty fell, it vanished from the political stage without so much as a token show of resistance. The record of Russian history indicates that between 1906 and 1917 the power of the monarchy remained undiminished, while that of the bureaucracy declined at an alarming rate—the very opposite of what Weber had anticipated.

Similar theoretical considerations caused Weber to misinterpret the two Revolutions of 1917. His political system did not allow for effective mass action, presupposing behind all political activity the manipulation of small groups operating in concert with the civil service and circles controlling money and credit. For this reason, in flagrant disregard of the evidence available to him at the time, Weber dismissed the March upheaval as a mere "swindle," engineered by the Middle classes in conjunction with Western banking circles, and the November coup as another "swindle," this time perpetrated by the Russian Army. In fact, however, neither event was engineered, and neither was a "swindle." Viewed in historical retrospect, the year 1917 in Russia appears as a period of rapid dissolution of the political and social fabric of the country

under the pressures of divergent popular forces such as the peasantry, the industrial proletariat, the army, the national minorities, and the intelligentsia, each striving for its own immediate interests. At no point was the Russian bourgeoisie, not to speak of Western capital, remotely in control of the situation. Even the Bolsheviks, who in the end succeeded in harnessing the destructive forces for their own ends, did not so much direct the Revolution as allow themselves to be directed by it; it was Lenin's political genius to have made a matter of necessity appear as a matter of choice, and thus to have gained the appearance of leadership. By assuming *a priori* the indispensability of a trained and self-perpetuating bureaucracy in the modern state, Weber eliminated, for all practical purposes, the possibility of fundamental political changes in the modern world. This assumption led him, in the case of Russia, to deny a genuine change in the character and personnel of the Russian ruling group in March 1917, when in fact the change was fundamental and irrevocable. The same reason accounts for Weber's misinterpretation of the November Revolution. In this case, too, he found it inconceivable that a modern state could come into being as a result of a complete breach with the administrative apparatus of the previous regime,[55] and he explained seeming evidence to the contrary in terms of three possibilities: either the break was apparent rather than "real," or else it was "real" but only temporary, or, finally, if neither was the case, then the new state could not last. If Lenin, too, was proved wrong in going to the other extreme and completely rejecting the need for skilled officials ("Under socialism *all* will administer in turn and will quickly become accustomed to nobody administering"[56]), he was certainly closer to the truth than Weber, who saw in them the very keystone of every political organism. At any rate, Lenin succeeded in establishing a viable state with intellectuals and professional conspirators—the "littérateurs" upon whom Weber heaped such contempt—without any administrative experience whatsoever. Contrary to Weber's expectations, the Soviet state survived, and did so without falling into the clutches of the old tsarist bureaucracy.

It would certainly not be sound to appraise Weber's whole conception of the modern state solely on the basis of his Russian studies, but it is quite clear that in the case of Russia his political theory had led him astray. His definition of the state as a factory-like "enterprise" caused him to overestimate grossly the importance of the technical aspects of government—the administrative apparatus, bureaucratic training and experience, and financial backing—and to underestimate or even ignore entirely those features of the state for which no parallels could be found in the rationally organized enterprise—tradition, ideology, public opinion, mass psychology. Indeed, his fascination with the techniques of government was so strong that he not only rejected the possibility of

revolutions in the twentieth century, but questioned the feasibility of a genuine democratic system.

But apart from the ultimate merits or demerits of Weber's political theory, it may be well to inquire how sound he was in imposing upon the day-by-day political developments of a society with a rich and old history concepts derived from the experience of other societies. The crux of the difficulty seems to lie in Weber's assumption that Russia had no political history—that it was a *tabula rasa*—and consequently that its future political development could be fairly well charted on the basis of certain rational criteria and parallels with other, historically more "advanced," countries. This reasoning is responsible for his otherwise inexplicable disregard of Russia's whole political tradition, and for his unfounded hope in Russia's ability to produce an entirely new civilization "from the ground up." But to treat Russia as if it had only come into being in the twentieth century was profoundly un-historical; such an attitude posited the existence of universal criteria of a "civilized" community—in Weber's case represented by the ideal-type of nineteenth-century Western European civilization—and ignored the historical experience that such concepts as "civilization" are relative. In fact, Russia had behind it nearly five hundred years of continuous statehood during which, despite frequent changes in the structure of its government, it had evolved certain specific political institutions and attitudes which required serious attention, no matter how imperfect they looked to a contemporary Western European.

Weber's approach to Russia's past had many affinities with the "philosophical" historiography which prevailed in Europe until the late eighteenth century, when European thinkers, partly under the impact of the French Revolution, came to realize its inadequacies as an instrument of social analysis, and evolved the methods of modern historicism. Indeed, what is the essential difference between Weber's bold imposition of patterns derived from the study of Western, largely German, political developments upon Russian reality, and the readiness of a Diderot or a Voltaire to offer Russian rulers advice based on the study of everything but Russia's own experience? And how does Weber's initial faith in Russia's unlimited cultural potentialities differ from the hopes entertained by many eighteenth-century philosophers, such as Leibniz, that Russia and other countries outside the Western orbit could evolve a more rational society because they were "starting from the beginning"? Behind both attitudes lie the same static concept of history, the same deductive method, the same disregard for local traditions and stress on universal values, and the same tendency to judge progress in terms of rational criteria. In retrospect, it appears that Weber would have been on far safer ground had he made an earnest effort to study the whole tradition

of Russian politics, and evolved his analytical framework for the study of Russia from this record. For one, this would have led him to pay less attention to the Russian bureaucracy as a political factor, and more to the intelligentsia. The categories employed in the analysis of a given nation should be primarily derived from that nation's own internal history; any other approach, no matter how exalted its motives, tends to impress upon events patterns which are alien to them, and thus to distort.

How acute and penetrating Weber could be whenever he approached events with an open mind, unencumbered by rigid theories, emerges clearly from his analysis of those aspects of Russian politics where—at least for a time—he considered a deviation from the general European pattern possible: in his early studies of Russian liberalism and parliamentarianism. Hoping against hope that Russia might develop a viable parliamentary democracy, whose cause in the West seemed to him doomed, Weber subjected to close scrutiny the record of Russian liberal forces and the structure and operations of the new Dumas, and arrived at conclusions which time, by and large, has justified. Weber had developed to an uncommon degree a sense of political realities: his understanding of the "true" meaning of events, his ability to see through legislative camouflage and ideological pretense, and to estimate the interests of various social groups, were indeed remarkable. Thus, he appraised correctly the shortcomings of the 1906 Constitution as a democratic instrument, the weaknesses and strengths of the principal groups involved in the struggle for power, and the unsoundness of the Provisional Government. One of the themes which runs like a red thread through his Russian studies: the Russian liberal movement could not succeed because it lacked a socio-economic interest base, also proved to have been sound. Rather than seek the weakness of Russian liberalism in the alleged insignificance of the middle class in Russia, as was more customary at the time, Weber sought it in the cleavage of the two groups involved in the liberal movement: the liberal intelligentsia and the middle class. He thus foresaw the fatal conflict within the middle-of-the-road forces which eventually, at the critical moment in 1917, helped bring about the collapse of Russian democracy, although he did ignore the role which the radical intelligentsia and the industrial proletariat—both ineffective in Germany—played in this process in Russia. In these investigations, Weber was aided by his social approach to politics; it provided him with all the advantages open to socialist analysis, without the drawbacks from which the latter usually suffers owing to a certain ridigity inherent in socialist doctrine. Unlike the majority of Russian liberals, who stressed the formal, legal aspect of political institutions, Weber placed the emphasis on the relationship between these institutions

and the interests of the various strata of Russian society. He also derived much insight from utilization of the experience of German liberal democracy, for, as a matter of historical fact, the situation of that force in Russia bore more similarities to the situation facing liberalism and parliamentarianism in Germany than to the one prevailing in the Anglo-Saxon world, which served most Russian liberals as a model.[57]

This method and skill would probably have stood Weber in good stead during World War I, had it not been for the fact that by this time another factor, his German nationalism, began to interfere with his scholarship and to becloud his vision. This emotional factor played an important role in his appraisal of events in Russia during 1917 and 1918.

In the end, Weber's enormous erudition and acute sense of political realities could not counterbalance grave shortcomings of his method, and the picture of Russian developments which he presented was, despite some valuable insights and remarkable predictions, a distorted one. The reason is twofold: his overestimation of reason as a factor in politics, and his fundamentally philosophic, un-historical approach. Both these traits reveal the extent to which Weber was imbued with the spirit of the Enlightenment.

NOTES

1. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber—Ein Lebensbild* (Tuebingen, 1926), p. 342.
2. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften,* (Munich, 1921), p. 26; henceforth referred to as *GPS.*
3. Karl Jaspers, *Max Weber,* (Oldenburg, 1932), p. 66.
4. *Hilfe* (Berlin), November 9, 1916.
5. *GPS,* pp. 8–30.
6. Quoted by A. Mettler, *Max Weber und die philosophische Problematik in unserer Zeit* (Leipzig, 1934), p. 17.
7. Quoted in J. P. Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics* (London, [1944]), p. 44.
8. *GPS,* p. 167.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 29.
10. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* (Tuebingen, 1947), I, p. 122; henceforth referred to as *W&G.*
11. *Ibid.,* p. 143.
12. *GPS,* p. 158.
13. Cf. this with Bismarck's opinion: "I am in no way in favor of an absolutist government. I consider parliamentary *cooperation*—if properly practiced—necessary and useful, as much as I consider parliamentary *rule* harmful and impossible." (Italics added.) Speech in the Reichstag, 1884, quoted in Max Klemm, ed., *Was sagt Bismarck dazu?,* II, (Berlin, 1924), p. 126. See also Otto Fuerst von Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (New York–Stuttgart, 1898), p. 412.

14. *GPS*, p. 140.

15. Quoted by Otto Koellreutter, in "Die staatspolitischen Anschauungen Max Webers und Oswald Spenglers," *Zeitschrift fuer Politik*, XIV (1925), pp. 482–83.

16. *GPS*, pp. 149–50.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

18. Max Weber, *Der Sozialismus* (Vienna, 1918), p. 24; this essay is reprinted in Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsaetze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik* (Tuebingen, 1924), pp. 492–518.

19. Max Weber, *Zur Lage der buergerlichen Demokratie in Russland, Beilage, Archiv fuer Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, XXII (1906), pp. 347–48; henceforth referred to as *Zur Lage*.

20. Mayer, *Max Weber*, p. 99.

21. *GPS*, p. 391.

22. *Zur Lage*, p. 349.

23. Compare this opinion with Leroy-Beaulieu's: "The commune . . . is, properly speaking, and setting autocracy apart, the only indigenous institution, the only living tradition the Russian people can boast." A. Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians* (London–New York, 1894), II, p. 2.

24. *Zur Lage*, p. 244.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 335.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 280.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

30. *Ibid.*, 281n.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 347–48.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 338n.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

34. Max Weber, *Russlands Uebergang zum Scheinkonstitutionalismus, Beilage, Archiv fuer Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, XXIII, No. 1 (1906); henceforth referred to as *Scheinkonstitutionalismus*.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

36. *W&G*, I, p. 173.

37. Mayer, *Max Weber*, p. 47.

38. This view is derived from Leroy-Beaulieu, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 77–81; see Weber's acknowledgment in *W&G*, II, p. 672.

39. *Scheinkonstitutionalismus*, p. 228. See Weber's allusion to Bismarck's role in Germany, *W&G*, II, p. 672.

40. *Scheinkonstitutionalismus*, pp. 249–50.

41. *Zur Lage*, p. 349.

42. As is done by Mayer, *Max Weber*, p. 26.

43. "Deutschland unter den europaeischen Weltmaechten," *Hilfe* (Berlin), November 9, 1916.

44. The date June 24, given in Marianne Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 718, is erroneous. This article is reprinted in *GPS*, pp. 107–25.

45. *GPS*, p. 117. (Weber here indicates the possibility of a Socialist-Revolutionary rather than Social-Democratic, dictatorship.)

46. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

48. "Innere Lage und Aussenpolitik," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 3, 1918, reprinted in *GPS*, pp. 323–36; *Der Sozialismus*, (Vienna, 1918).

49. *GPS*, pp. 323–24.

50. *Der Sozialismus*, pp. 29–30.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

53. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 648.

54. Good accounts of Russian politics during this period may be found in M. Florinsky, *The End of the Russian Empire* (New Haven, CT, 1931), and Sir Bernard Pares, *The Fall of the Russian Monarchy* (London, 1939).

55. Cf. his statement in *W&G*, II, p. 670: "Under all the changes of rulers which had occurred in France since the First Empire, the political apparatus remained essentially the same. The reason for this is the fact that this apparatus—wherever it has control of the modern media of information and communications (the telegraph)—makes a 'revolution,' in the sense of a violent formation of entirely new political structures, an ever-greater impossibility, owing both to purely technical reasons and to its innerly rationalized structure; it has replaced 'revolution' with *coups d'état*. . . . "

56. V.I. Lenin, *Sochineniia*, 3rd ed., XXI, p. 452.

57. The Russian Fundamental Laws of 1906 were deliberately patterned after the Prussian as well as the Japanese constitutions, which the Russian ruling groups took as prototypes of regimes with a constitutional order but without parliamentary rule. See P. Miliukov, in P. Miliukov, C. Seignobos, and L. Eisenmann, *Histoire de Russie* III, (Paris, 1933), p. 1123–24.

CHAPTER 8

The First Experiment in Soviet National Policy: The Bashkir Republic, 1917–1920

There are few weapons in the Soviet arsenal of propaganda which have been used with better results than the alleged successes of the Bolsheviks in solving the national problem. The contention which the leaders of the Soviet Union have to some extent succeeded in impressing upon a large segment of public opinion abroad asserts that due partly to inherent qualities, and partly to the efforts of Stalin, Bolshevism has eliminated from public life the national animosities which supposedly characterized Russian life before. Applied retroactively, this formula, which is dominant among Soviet writings of recent date, seeks to portray the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution as a result of the harmonious cooperation of the exploited elements of the various minorities with the Russian proletariat, fighting, under the aegis of the Bolshevik Party, for their economic and national freedom against the international class of exploiters.

Yet, one need only look somewhat deeper into the history of the Russian Revolution and Civil War, especially of the ethnically heterogeneous borderlands, to be convinced that such unqualified assertions are a distortion which rests on outright falsification of historical evidence. The course of the Revolution and the form which the spreak of Bolshevik power assumed in the multinational areas, were of a much more complex nature. The actual picture is far removed from the simple formula: the exploited of all nationalities against the exploiters of all nationalities, advanced by recent Moscow propaganda. In each borderland region, not

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only economic, but also national factors played a large part, and more often than not, when directly confronted, nationalism won the upper hand over so-called class interests and loyalties. Nor was the record of the Soviet government of the Bolshevik Party during those initial years anything like the one which is portrayed by Soviet hagiography. Often, instead of performing the rôle of an arbiter and leader of exploited classes, the Party apparatus was employed as means of advancing the specific interests of the Russian population and suppressing the national aspirations of the minorities.

Not untypical is the story of the establishment of the Bashkir republic, the first autonomous unit created by the Soviet Union. Its subjects, the Bashkirs, a semi-nomadic people, probably of Turco-Tatar origin, inhabited the South-Western slopes of the Ural Mountains. Masters of a vast steppe, since at least the tenth century, they occupied themselves until recently mainly with cattle-grazing, apiculture, and forestry. In the thirteenth century they adopted Mohammedanism, (which they never practiced too strictly), and in the middle of the sixteenth century, to escape the combined Tatar and Kirghiz pressure on their territories, they placed themselves under the protection of Moscow. In return for its protection, they paid at first a fixed tribute (*iasak*), later replaced by a salt monopoly of the Moscow treasury, but in every other respect they retained complete freedom.

Much of the tragedy which accompanied the history of the Bashkirs during their three and a half centuries under Moscow's rule, could be ascribed to their unfortunate geographic location. A primitive, poor people, they were placed by history directly in the path of Russian colonization and industrial expansion. Their very extensive land-holdings were a natural object of desire on the part of Russian peasants, spreading from the centre of the state to the Volga and its branches. And, although various statutes were enacted by the Tsarist government to protect Bashkir lands from outsiders, their vital grazing grounds actually diminished with frightful rapidity, being either bought or rented by speculators and peasants from the inexperienced, intimidated natives. With the establishment of industrial centers in the Urals, notably under Peter I, additional mineral-rich areas previously used for grazing, were acquired by factories and mines. Thus it happened that over the centuries the once vast country of the Bashkir nomads contracted and lost its ethnic homogeneity. It became a veritable national mosaic, in which Russian and Tatar islands separated the Bashkirs from the cities, rivers and industrial centers. The Bashkirs retreated ever more into the mountainous backcountry, occasionally revolting locally or participating in the great popular rebellions of the area, like those of Razin and Pugachev.

But while life in Tsarist Russia was by no means easy for the Bashkirs, it would be most incorrect to assert, as is frequently done in the Soviet press, that they were on their way to complete extinction from which they were only saved by the establishment of the Soviet state. Statistics indicate that the Bashkir population in Tsarist Russia grow very rapidly, doubling itself in recent times approximately every thirty years. The half a million Bashkirs, who were counted in the middle of the nineteenth century grow to over two milllion by 1917.[1] Unlike most Russian peasants who were serfs, the Bashkirs were always free and enjoyed the relatively high status of *obrok*-paying peasants. They possessed their own army, which distinguised itself in all of Russia's major wars since the sixteenth century. They also enjoyed full civic equality. In one respect only, the linguistic, is it possible to speak of a vanishing Bashkir nation under the *ancien régime.* Most Bashkirs were under the cultural influence of their more numerous and more highly civilized coreligionists, the Volga Tatars, and on the eve of the Revolution nearly one-half of the Bashkirs considered Tatar their native tongue.[2]

The roots of the Bashkir national movement were predominantly economic in character, intimately connected with the land problem. Among such primitive people, still in the pre-agricultural state of development, culturally dominated by their neighbors, and lacking historical traditions of independent statehood, a national awakening naturally occurred late. Its immediate stimulus was the March Revolution and the hopes which it engendered. The swift increase of their population, combined with the decrease of their holdings, placed the land problem in the centre of Bashkir politics. They needed more soil, and, like a large portion of the peasant population, believed that the abolition of the Tsarist government would make this immediately feasible. The peculiarity of the Bashkir land demands lay in the fact that they bore a national, rather than class character, for they were directed against the colonizing Russians. It is from them that they expected the Provisional government to take away the soil which they lost through centuries of colonization. For this reason the Bashkir national movement from the very moment of its inception, in the Spring of 1917, merged completely with the economic strivings of the Bashkir people, as if the two were sides of the same coin. It is for this reason, too, that unlike most Moslem nationalists in Russia, who strove for cultural autonomy, the Bashkir national leaders of almost all political creeds were satisfied with nothing short of teritorial autonomy. Only in this manner, by becoming masters in their own house, they felt, could the Bashkirs solve their most pressing economic problems.

The movement towards separate autonomy emerged as soon as it became apparent that the Bashkirs could not count on support in their

ambitions from other Moslem nationalities. This isolation of Bashkir nationalists emerged clearly at the All-Russian Moslem Congress which met in Moscow in May 1917, to discuss the demands which the Islamic peoples of Russia hoped to present to the fourthcoming Constituent Assembly. The Bashkirs dispatched a popularly elected delegation, led by a 27-year old teacher and political aspirant Zeki Validov (Ahmed Zeki Validi) to speak for their interests. The Congress, however, was dominated by Volga Tatars, who forced through resolutions urging the Constituent Assembly to establish extra-territorial autonomy for Russian Moslems, and to nationalize all land, both of which were contrary to Bashkir demands. Validov's suggestion that the Congress support the Bashkir desires for territorial autonomy within either the ethnically homogeneous Bashkir territories ("Small Bashkiriya") or within a larger Moslem Ural-Volga state ("Idel-Ural") were rejected, and as a consequence the majority of Bashkir delegates, headed by Validov, ostentatiously left the Congress.[3] Aware that in their effort to fight Russian colonists they fell under Tatar domination, Bashkir national leaders took steps to form a separate national government. In July, 1917, they formed a Regional Bureau and convened in Ufa a Bashkir Congress, which in turn elected a twelve-men Bashkir National Council (*Shuro*).

In the meantime, the relations between the Bashkir and Russian masses of the population rapidly deteriorated as a result of struggles between the two nationalities over land. When the Provisional government, pursuing its policy of delaying all fundamental modifications until the convocation of the Consituent Assembly, refused to accede to demands for a redistribution of land, Bashkir peasants took matters into their own hands. They began to seize state properties and cut down forests. Here, however they encountered opposition from their Russian neighbors, who were convinced that the Bashkirs still possessed more land than they could possibly use, and who were most eager to increase their own holdings. Throughout the summer and fall of 1917 it came to spontaneous, often bloody clashes between Russian and Bashkir villages, the former being aided by the peasants employed in factories, and the growing animosity between the two groups played an important part in the subsequent history of the area.[4]

In November, 1917, the Provisional government, which the Bashkir National Council supported against its enemies of the right and left, was deposed, and the area over which Validov and his followers were endeavoring to establish political authority was thrown into the vortex of civil war and anarchy. Early that month Ufa, where the Bashkir leaders has their headquarters, fell into the hands of a Russian Soviet, hostile to their aims, and the Council moved to Orenburg. There it entered into an agreement with the Cossack Ataman Dutov and proclaimed in

the middle of the month the establishment of an autonomous Bashkir republic within the Russian federation. In view of the recent Bolshevik proclamation, including the right to separation, the Bashkir Council dispatched a telegram to Lenin, urging him to recognize the sovereignty of Bashkiriia, which Lenin without hesitation did.[5] Thus it seemed that there was nothing to prevent the realization of the ambitions of Bashkir political leaders. In reality however, the position of the Bashkir Council was extremely weak. By the very nature of its economic goals it won the hostility of the Russian population, and it could expect little sympathy from the Volga Tatars, who saw in Bashkir irredentism a short-sighted and futile attempt to gain selfish ends at the expense of the all-Moslem movement. And with the politically disorganized Bashkir masses it had as yet little contact.

The position of the Council was further weakened when the Bolsheviks, despite Lenin's recent pledge of recognition, began to organize their own Red Bashkir government. The Communists were motivated by the desire to counteract the successful national propaganda carried on by non-Bolshevik Moslem politicians, and also to attract to their cause some Moslem personnel, whose absence in Red ranks was painfully felt. In February, 1918, after defeating Dutov, the Red Army occupied Orenburg. The Soviet, which immediately assumed control over the city, saw no reason to acquiesce in the existence of what it considered a reactionary, nationalistic Bashkir clique, and on February 4, apparently without directives from Moscow, arrested Validov and the other members of the Bashkir Council. The very next day in its place there was established in Orenburg a Bolshevik Temporary Revolutionary Soviet of Bashkurdistan, strongly subordinated to the Orenburg Soviet.[6] It was hoped that this Red organization would be able to win over to the Bolshevik cause the heretofore politically indifferent Bashkir masses.

But the supposedly proletarian Bashkir Soviet, the Bolshevik's own creation, displayed at once nationalistic tendencies which forced the central Russian authorities to dissolve it. In view of the popularity of national slogans among the Volga-Ural Moslems, the Soviet government decided early in March, 1918, to take steps to create an autonomous state there. Under the influence of Volga Tatars, who dominated the then influential Commissariat of Moslem Affairs in Moscow, it was decided to create a state roughly corresponding to the limits of the "Idel-Ural," that is one which would embrace the Tatars, Bashkirs, Chuvash and other nationalities of the Volga-Ural territory.[7] This immediately evoked protests alike from the Russian Bolsheviks of the Ural area, and from the Bashkir Soviet. The former objected to national autonomy in principle, as a dangerous precedent. Time after time various Soviets in the area passed resolutions opposing the decision to create a Tatar-

Bashkir republic, and delegations were dispatched to Moscow to argue against it with Lenin himself.[8] The Bashkir Soviet opposed the project for another reason. It objected to the inclusion of the Bashkirs into a common state with the Tatars. In a prepared draft the Bashkir Soviet demanded the creation of a separate Bashkir Soviet republic, with broad powers of self-rule.[9] In view of this opposition, a special conference was held in Moscow in May, 1918, to discuss the matter. The Conference ended in a victory for the Tatar supporters of the united state. Acting as a representative of the central authorities, Stalin turned down alike the pleadings of the opponents of autonomy in general, and of the defenders of separate Bashkir autonomy.[10] The project of the Bashkir Soviet was not accepted because it called for too great decentralization, which would have weakened the authority of the central government. As a consequence of this meeting steps were taken to form a united republic, and the short-lived Bashkir Soviet was dissolved.

The projected Tatar-Bashkir Republic, however, never came into existence for before long the area between the Urals and Volga fell into the hands of the anti-Bolshevik forces, and now once more Validov and his followers had their chance. Validov himself was freed from Bolshevik prison in early February, 1918, by a squadron of Cossack raiders, and was busy behind White lines organizing an army. Before long he succeeded in forming several regiments, which were thrown into the battle on the side of Dutov and Kolchak under his command.

The collaboration between the Bashkirs and Whites did not last long. It was wrecked by the lack of tact and genuine understanding of the aspirations of the minor nationalities on the part of the White leaders. Obviously, the Bashkirs expected something in return for their military aid, at least some promise of autonomy and agreement with their land demands. But this Kolchak and his supporters refused to grant. They had no sympathy with the national strivings of the minorities, whom they accused of taking advantage of Russia's troubled times to gain selfish ends. Furthermore serious friction developed between Validov and the Whites over jurisdiction in the occupied Bashkir territories, over the billeting of Cossack troops in the native villages, taxation of the population, and military authority. Finally, in October, 1918, in an effort to unify his forces, Kolchak gave orders to dissolve the separate Bashkir corps, and to scatter its component units throughout the White Army.[11] Disgusted with the treatment which they received form the Whites, Bashkir leaders began to consider switching sides. They were above all nationalists, interested in the well-being of their own people, and were not devoid of a bandwagon psychology. They were neither well aware, nor much concerned with the ideological aspects of the war, and when,

in the Fall of 1918, Red troops reoccupied their homeland, they began negotiations with Red detachments in the area.

In their talks with the Bolsheviks the Bashkirs were in a position to put forth certain conditions, because they had a fairly sizeable and well-armed military force, which could play an important rôle in determining the outcome of the battle. In early February, 1919, a delegation of the Bashkir regiments was dispatched to the Reds, to sound out their attitude towards Bashkir autonomy.[12] The answer proved satisfactory, and after a month of negotiations an agreement was reached. It stipulated the creation of an Autonomous Bashkir Republic, located within the approximate boundaries of so-called "Small Bashkiriia." The Bashkirs were to elect at once a Bashkir Revolutionary Committee (*Bashrevkom*), which was to exercise supreme authority until the convocation of the Congress of Soviets of Bashkiriia. The Bashrevkom was to be master of everything within its territory, with the exception of the railroads, factories, and mines which were to be subordinated to the All-Russian Commissariat of National Economy, and the armed forces, which, while retained as a separate unit, were to obey the All-Russian Commissariat of War.[13] In return, the Bashkir troops were to pass over to the Reds. The agreement signified a far-reaching concession on the part of the Soviet government. It meant the abandonment of the project of the Tatar-Bashkir republic, and the economic self-rule than Moscow was generally willing to grant at that time. To the Bashkirs the agreement appeared on paper eminently satisfactory. It seemed that now, at long last, they were in a position to realize their national ideals and above all put into practice their land program. On February 22, 1919, Bashkir troops elected a Bashrevkom, which included their military leader, Validov, and crossed the battle line over to the Reds.

From the very beginning of their association with the Bolsheviks the leaders of the Bashkir national movement experienced a series of mishaps, due partly to the unbridgeable mental gap which separated the two sides, and partly to a fundamental difference of interests between the Bashkir and Russian populations of the area. The Bashkir leaders conceived the agreement as a *carte blanche* to take economic and political measures according to their own desires. They drew up a series of measures calling for the compulsory expropriation and resettlement of all non-Moslems who came to the Bashkir areas during the Stolypin reforms and their replacement by Bashkirs who were left outside the limits of the republic. At the same time they began to make plans to create an autonomous Bashkir Communist party and to exchange diplomatic representatives with other Soviet republics.[14]

In the Fall of 1919, when the Red army once more occupied the Ural area, the Bashrevkom returned to Bashkiriia, and announced its as-

sumption of power with a special order, in which it called on the entire population of the republic to obey its authority.[15]

These aspirations were in basic conflict with the interests and ideals of the provincial Bolshevik party and state institutions among which the Bashrevkom was to work. Most Soviet organs in the Urals were predominantly Great Russian in their ethnic makeup, because their personnel consisted largely of industrial workers, soldiers of the military garrisons, and peasants, none of which existed among the Moslems in any sizeable numbers. Being a free people, the Bashkirs were not subject to that peculiar form of serf-labor which founded Russian industry in the Urals, and hence had no proletariat. Their armed detachments fought on the White side, and their own peasantry was not very numerous, since only a small part of the Bashkirs engaged as yet in settled agricultural pursuits. Hence it is not surprising that the various Soviets which sprang up throughout the revolutionary period were predominanty Russian and came to fight for specifically Russian interests. That meant, among others, that local Soviet institutions took the side of Russian colonists in their struggle for land with the Bashkir peasantry. Bashkirs were, in many cases prevented form joining local Soviets,[16] and of the land which Bolshevik institutions confiscated in that area in the name of Communism, the lion's share went to Russian colonists.[17] "Despite our best intentions," wrote in retrospect the delegate of the central Soviet authorities to Bashkiriia, "we [the Bolsheviks], simply spearheaded the onslaught of the Russian kulaks on Bashkir lands."[18]

Those institutions displayed almost universally unmitigated hostility to the very principle of national autonomy. Time after time the various congresses of Soviets and Provincial or Regional Revolutionary Committees of the Volga-Ural region passed strongly-worded resolutions condeming the establishment by the central authorities of a national Bashkir republic.[19] The feeling was prevalent that the region was too important economically to be separated from the Ural industrial centers, that the native proletariat was too weak both physically and morally to uphold Soviet power if left to itself, that the Bashkirs in general and the leaders of the Bashrevkom in particular had fought on the White side and could not be trusted, and that the creation of national republics altogether ran contrary to the international principles of Communism. It may be said without fear of exaggeration that, except for a few influential friends in the center, among them Lenin, the Bashkir republic found no sympathy whatever in Bolshevik circles.[20] For that reason, as one of the leaders of the Bashkir movement later stated, the Bashrevkom throughout its existence had to fight for the very survival of the young republic.[21]

The difficulties began soon after the Bashrevkom returned to its homeland in September, 1919. It found that during the interval which separated the reoccupation of the area by Red troops from its own arrival, virtually the entire territory of the Bashkir republic fell under the firm control of the Executive committee of the adjacent Ufa province.[22] Even in its capital city of Sterlitamak all the office buildings were held by officials from Ufa, who completely ignored the existence of the republic. The scattered and not numerous but influential Bolshevik party cells on Bashkir territory were composed mainly of Russian factory workers who often refused to subordinate themselves to the Bashkirs and preferred to obey Red institutions in Orenburg or Ufa.[23] It required a considerable effort, often accompanied by physical force, for the Bashrevkom to assert its authority on its own territory, against the hostility of Soviet institutions in the neighboring provinces and Bolshevik organizations within Bashkiriya. This effort did not contribute to the establishment of friendly relations between Bashkirs and Russians.

The Bashrevkom was only partly successful, for before long it was faced with another, even more formidable challenge to its authority: the Communist Party. Up to the end of 1919, control over the Party in Bashkiriia belonged theoretically to the Bashrevkom, which did not make any attempt either to organize it more effectively or to introduce its personnel and ideology into Bashkir political institutions. For this negligence which stemmed partly form their antipathy towards the elements who filled local Party cells, and partly from a lack of understanding of the place of the Party in a Communist society, the Bashkir leaders were severely criticized by envoys sent from Moscow.[24] This control they lost in November, 1919, when, under pressure of those envoys, they convened the first Bashkir Party conference. As could be expected, the conference was heavily dominated by Russians, who succeeded in electing a Regional Committee of the Party (*Obkom*) in which their own people held the key positions. With time this Obkom came to perform the function of a weapon with which local Russians and Tatars, supported by influential persons delegated from the center, effectively destroyed the national autonomy of the Bashkirs.

The first task confronting the Obkom was to stregthen the local Party cells and to centralize the chaotic Party organization. The difficulty lay in the lack of contact with the already existing cells, and, above all, in the inability of the Party to obtain a hold over the broad masses of the Bashkir population which sympathized with the Bashrevkom and displayed undisguised hostility towards Communist officials. Hence a novel and very effective method was employed. It so happened that at about the same time the Soviet government in Moscow created a Society for Aid to Bashkiriia (*Bashkirpomoshch*) in order to help alleviate somewhat

the terrible starvation and disease which began to decimate the peoples of the area. When the head of this Society arrived in Sterlitamak, the heads of the Obkom at once perceived the excellent opportunity which fell into their hands, and made a common cause with him. The Obkom and the local agents of the *Bashkirpomoshch* took advantage of the desperate plight of the native masses and of their dependence on the material assistance which the Communists alone could provide, to organize a powerful network of subordinate Bolshevik cells. A large portion of the 150,000 Bashkirs who received help were formed into so-called Committees of the Poor, and both the personnel and financial resources of the allegedly philanthropic society served as a means for the establishment of an efficient, centralized Party apparatus.[25] Within five months the Party membership increased fivefold, and by July, 1920, ninety percent of the counties were equipped with Communist organizations,[26] all subordinated to the Bashkir Obkom.

Feeling in a much stronger position, the Russian and Tatar leaders of the Obkom challenged the very authority of the Bashrevkom. In January, 1920, on the basis of certain rumors that the Obkom planned to do away with Bashkir autonomy, the leader of the Bashkirs, Kh. Iumagulov (Validov was at the time in Moscow) ordered the arrest of several Tatar members of the Obkom. This provided the Obkom with the opportunity to strike. Urgent appeals were sent out by the Obkom to the neighboring provinces of Ufa and Orenburg and to the Turkestan Red Army for military assistance, and soon several fortified points under the command of an officer whom the Bashkirs dubbed "Governor-General" were established throughout the country. Since most of the Bashkir troops were long before dispatched to fight the Whites and Poles on the Western front, the Bashrevkom had no armed might in its possession. A meeting of the Obkom which followed condemned any attempt either in deed or by word of mouth to increase the existing degree of Bashkir autonomism, and declared officially that henceforth the Obkom would directly lead the work of the Bashrevkom and approve all more important political appointments in Bashkiriia.[27] The Bashkirs were also deprived of control over the secret police (*Cheka*) on their territory.

The Bashrevkom found itself in an extremely difficult situation. Its authority was rapidly undermined and became dependent almost entirely on the good graces of the central authorities. With bitterness the leaders of the Bashrevkom saw a group of foreign Russians and Tatars transform themselves from a minority into a ruling power by means of the Communist party dictatorship, and use their position to further the interests of Russian colonists. The political scene in Bashkiriia became very cloudy. In March, 1920, Trotsky held in Ufa a series of conferences

with representatives of the Bashrevkom and Obkom in an endeavor to smooth out their differences. A resolution was drawn up favoring the Bashrevkom, and condemning as unjustified the ruthless interference of Bolshevik party organizations in the affairs of the Bashkir state.[28] The principal political figures on both sides were recalled to Russia, and to deal with any future disagreements there was established in Moscow a special commission, with Trotsky as chairman and Stalin and Kamenev as members.

Up to this time the Bashkir leaders still retained the belief that their difficulties with the Communist Party and Soviet institutions were due to the obstinancy and chauvinism of local Bolsheviks rather than to any fault on the part of the central authorities. On the whole this assumption was not unjustified. Evidence indicates that the actions which caused friction between Bashkir and Russian institutions were undertaken by local Bolsheviks on their own iniative, with little direction from Moscow.[29] Both Lenin and Trotsky had proven themselves friendly to the Bashkirs, and if Stalin tended to favor the Tatars, he was at least for the retention of autonomy. It was generally accepted that if not for the influence of the center, local Bolsheviks would have done away with Bashkir autonomy altogether. But the Bashkir leaders failed to perceive that the support given them by the center was not disinterested and unchangeable. While Moscow desired to attract to its side as many of the minorities as possible, it became after the victorious civil war ever more anxious to strengthen its hold on the economic and political apparatus of the entire country. Already in May, 1918, during the discussions on the Tatar-Bashkir republic, Stalin said bluntly:

> The point is that at the present transitory moment . . . the country needs a strong, all-Russian power, capable of delivering the final blow to the enemies of socialism and of organizing a new, Communist economy. . . . It is precisely for this reason that it is necessary to leave in the hands of the central authorities all the functions which are of importance for the whole country, and to leave the regional organs primarily political-administrative and cultural functions of a purely local nature.[30]

As its power consolidated, and expecially as Stalin attained ever greater influence in the Party, Moscow's initial policy of liberalism toward the national minorities gave more and more way to one of centralization.

On May 19, 1920, the Soviet government published, without having first consulted the Bashkirs, a new decree of Bashkir autonomy.[31] It struck like lightning out of a blue sky. The new decree was completely centralistic in spirit and deprived the government of the autonomous republic of most of the rights guaranteed by the 1919 agreement. Virtually

all the political, financial, and economic organs were subordinated to the central authorities, and the Bashkirs were left nothing but purely adminsitrative powers. It was a clear violation of the understanding reached the previous year, and the final blow to Bashkir hopes.

Following the publication of the new decree, the Bashrevkom held a secret meeting, where bitter anger was voiced at such a breach of faith which made a comedy of Bashkir autonomy. After more than a year of cooperation with the Bolsheviks none of the plans or hopes of the Bashkir people were realized—they had neither the land nor the self-rule from which they had expected so much. A strongly-worded resolution was adopted:

> In view of the imperialistic tendencies of the Russians, which hinder in every manner the development of the national minorities; in view of the lack of faith of the center toward Bashkir Communists, Bashkir officials will abandon Bashkiriia and depart for Turkestan, for the purpose of creating there an independent Communist Party, to which the Bashkir Regional Committee [*Obkom*] will be subordinate. The Eastern Communist Party must be admitted into membership of the Comintern. The aim of this exodus is by no means to rouse the national masses against the Soviet government, but rather, through the abandonment of offices, to protest against Russian chauvinism.[32]

Another protest written by Validov objected to the new autonomy as giving the minorites less self-rule than they enjoyed under Nicholas II and Stolypin, and accused the Party, especially Stalin, of ignoring their demands and embarking upon a course of out-and-out Great Russian chauvinism.[33] Some time later, in the middle of June, fulfilling the threat, virtually the entire Bashkir official personnel abandoned its posts and vanished into the mountains.

The desertion of the Bashrevkom and other Bashkir officials soon threw all Bashkiriia into a civil war which permitted the Russian elements to obtain both economic advantages and complete political control over the republic. The Obkom requested immediately armed help from the neighboring provinces and from the Turkestan Red Army, so that by the end of July, 1920, the entire republic was under occupation. The Russian peasants and workers, mobilized to deal with the rebels, eagerly flocked into punitive detachments to revenge themselves on the Bashkirs and to seize the land and cattle which they have long coveted. Under the guise of suppression of a counter-revolutionary uprising, there began a veritable reign of terror, accompanied by indiscriminate looting and murder of the Bashkir population.[34] The latter in increasing numbers flocked into the mountains to join the rebels, and in a sense the Bashkir

uprising of 1920 was the result of a merger of two separate opposition movements: the initial political opposition of Bashkir officials intellectuals was joined by the outbreak of a popular rebellion of the Bashkir masses against Bolshevik policies. The strength of the latter was demonstrated by the fact that the revolt went on even after most of the Bashrevkom officials were either apprehended or forced to flee abroad.

While the rebellion raged the Obkom succeeded in completing its conquest of the political institutions of Bashkiriia. During the Summer of 1920, Bashkirs, who were now considered to have conclusively demonstrated their unreliabilty, were eliminated from the Party and state apparatus. Neither the new Obkom nor the new Bashrevkom, which was appointed in place of the old one, contained even a token number of Bashkirs.[35] In the fall, the First Congress of Soviets of Bashkiriia was convened for the purpose of electing a new government. This Congress, which performed the functions of a Constituent Assembly, also did not contain any Bashkirs, because their delegates were arrested as "nationalists."[36] It is not surprising that the government which it elected also consisted of representatives of all kinds of ethnic groups, except Bashkirs.[37] Thus the Bashkir Republic, formally organized in late 1920, had no natives in the government. The Party, in close alliance with Russian colonists, who now filled the key positions, and in intimate contact with envoys from the center, had emerged victorious.

The suppression of the rebellion was only a question of time. It succumbed to the superior Red forces, the unusually severe winter, and the hunger which attended it. The Bolsheviks granted full amnesty to the rebels. Most of the leaders of the old Bashrevkom were captured and returned to minor posts in the republic, while the remainder either fell in the ranks of the *Basmachis* in Central Asia, or else, like Validov, made their way abroad. What price the Bashkirs paid in lives and property for the Bolshevik revolution may never be exactly known. The census of 1926 counted only some 700,000 Bashkirs,[38] whereas a decade earlier there were over two million of them.

The history of the establishment of the Bashkir republic indicates quite clearly the great importance which the national factor assumed during the Russian Revolution and Civil War. The social and political upheaval which accompanied the birth of the Communist régime stimulated the national emotions of Russians and non-Russians alike, and revolutionary action quite often took the form of a national, rather than class struggle. With the Bashkirs the reasons for this phenomenon are not far to seek. The historical heritage had produced a situation where economic interests (in this case the need of land) coincided almost entirely with national lines, so that the contest between the nomad and the encroaching colonist expressed itself as a clash between Bashkir and

Russian. This factor alone explains why the simple formula of class struggle has very little application to the early history of Soviet Bashkiriia.

In this struggle both sides employed political institutions to further their respective interests. The Bashkirs, who thanks to their army, secured for themselves an autonomous republic and its main political positions, endeavored to use the apparatus of the state to free themselves from the cultural domination of the Tatars, and to retrieve the vast lands lost to Russian colonists in the past. By the very nature of their social and economic structure they took virtually no part in the Soviets and in the Bolshevik Party cells, which were composed mainly of industrial workers, soldiers, and peasants, none of which the nomadic Bashkirs possessed. Those institutions received, even on the territories inhabited by Bashkirs, a predominantly Russian character. With time, the Bolshevik Party became a weapon with which the Russian interests attained their victory over the Bashkir state. Their strength lay in their superior organization, in their ability to control the masses through such means as food distribution, in the help which they received from the neighboring provinces, and in the very Bolshevik concept of the party, which made it possible to ignore usual democratic procedure. To this must be added the increased strength which the Russians gained by forming an alliance with the Tatar elements, who hoped to win a controlling position among Soviet Moslems and opposed Bashkir separatism. The final factor which decided the issue was the support given the Russian elements by the central authorities, in whose interest it was to support the Russo-Tatar efforts against Bashkir tendencies towards decentralization. By means of the Party, the Russians deprived the Bashkirs systematically of control over their army, secret police, and government, until the Bashkirs were stripped of all authority over their homeland. Instead of the greater independence which they hoped to gain, they lost even that privilege of self-rule which they enjoyed in Tsarist Russia. In this contest, the Communist Party, which acted as the tool of the colonist against the poor Bashkir, played anything but the rôle of an impartial leader of the oppressed of all nationalities.

NOTES

1. The approximate figures of the total Bashkir population are as follows: 1834—392,000; 1867—667,000; 1897—ca.1,500,000 (the exact figue of the 1897 census was 1,320,000, but the criterion used then was the linguistic, not national). Cf. F.A. Fieldstrup, *Etnicheskii sostav naseleniia Priuralia* (Leningrad, 1926), p. 36. For the 1917 estimate of 2 million, see *Zhizn' natsional'nostei*, June 15, 1920; also M. Murtazin, *Bashkiriia i Bashkirskie voiska v grazhdanskuiu voinu* (Leningrad, 1927), pp. 52 and 72.

2. Cf. Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSR, *Narodnost' i rodnoi iazyk naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow, 1928), p. 14.

3. G. von Mende, *Der Nationale Kampf der Russlandtuerken* (Berlin, 1936), pp. 130 ff.

4. Cf. S. Atnagulov, *Bashkiriia* (Moscow-Lenngrad, 1925), pp. 55 ff.; A. Adigamov, "Pravda o Bashkirakh," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei,* No. 26, July 13, 1919.

5. S. Manatov, "Bashkirskaia Avtonomnaia Respublika," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei,* No. 1 (1923), p. 42.

6. Recent Soviet writers endeavor to place the responsiblity for the arrest of the Bashkir Council on the Temporary Revolutionary Soviet of Bashkurdistan, in order the make this action appear as an aspect of a class struggle within Bashkir ranks. (P. Raimov, "K istorii obrazovaniia Bashkirskoi Avtonomnoi Sovetskoi Respubliki," *Voprosy Istorii,* (April 1948), 28). This assertion, however is false, as it is evident from contemporary sources that the order for the arrest was given by the Russian Orenburg Revolutionary Committee and the Soviet: Cf. *Izvestiia Oblastnogo Komiteta soveta rabochikh, krestianskikh i armeiskikh deputatov Urala,* No. 45 (March, 1918), as quoted in F. Syromolotov, "Lenin i Stalin v sozdanii Tataro-Bashkirskoi respubliki", *Revoliutsiia i natsional'nosti,* No. 8 (1935), 17; also Kh. Iumagulov, "Ob odnom neudachnom opyte", *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia,* No. 3 (1928), 173.

7. Sobranie uzakonenii raboche-krestianskogo pravitel'stva, 1917–1918, I, 30–394.

8. "When in April 1918, there was proclaimed the decree establishing the Tatar-Bashkir republic, almost all non-Moslem state and party workers of the Volga and Ural regions were opposed to it." Karl Grazis in *Zhizn' natsional'nostei,* February 8, 1920; Cf. also S. Said-Galiev, "Tatrespublika i t. Lenin," *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia,* No. 9 (1925), pp. 107–17; Syromolotov, *loc. cit.,* p. 22.

9. Raimov, *loc. cit.,* p. 22.

10. *Pravda* (Moscow), May 19, 1918; I.V. Stalin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1947), IV, 88 ff.

11. Murtazin, *op. cit.,* pp. 202–03.

12. *Zhizn' natsional'nostei,* February 16, 1919.

13. *Sobranie Uzakonenii—sbornik dekretov 1919 goda* (Petrograd, 1920), 295–98.

14. Samoilov, "Malaia Bashkiriia," *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia,* No. 11 (1926), pp. 201 ff.

15. *Zhizn' natsional'nostei,* September 21, 1919; Cf. *Sbornik dekretov 1919 goda,* p. 293.

16. Adigamov, *loc. cit.*

17. Cf. S. Dimanshtein, "Bashkiriia v 1918–1920 gg.," *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia,* No. 5 (1928), p. 123

18. P. Mostovenko, "O bol'shikh oshibkakh 'Maloi Bashkirii'," *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia,* No. 5 (1928), p. 124.

19. Cf. Iumagulov, *loc. cit.,* p. 173; Mostovenko, *loc. cit.,* p. 197; Syromolotov, *loc. cit.,* p. 16–17; Adigamov, *loc. cit.*

20. Characteristic was the reply given to a Bashkir delegation in 1920 by Lutovinov, the secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in

Moscow: "That whole autonomous republic, which you take so seriously, is only a game to keep you people busy"; Dimanshtein, *loc. cit.*, p. 143.

21. Iumagulov, *loc. cit.*, p. 172.
22. Mostovenko, *loc. cit.*, p. 107.
23. Iumagulov, *loc. cit.*, p. 186.
24. F. Samoilov, *Malaia Bashkiriia* (Moscow, 1933), pp. 21 ff.
25. A. Daugel-Dauge, "Opyt Bashkirpomoshchi," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei*, December 8, 1920; *Idem.*, January 26, 1921; S. Samoilov, *Malai Bashkiriia*, pp. 35 ff.; Iumagulov, *loc. cit.*, p. 186.
26. *Zhizn' natsional'nostei*, January 26, 1921.
27. Sh. Tipeev, K istorii natsional'nogo dvizheniia v Sovetskoi Bashkirii (Ufa, 1929), p. 59.
28. Samoilov, *Malaia Bashkiriia*, pp. 65 ff.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 91. ff.
30. Stalin, *op. cit.*, IV, 89.
31. *Sobranie uzakonenii 1920 goda*, No. 45–203.
32. Murtazin, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
33. *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia*, No. 12 (1926), pp. 205–07.
34. Mostovenko, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Murtazin, *op. cit.*, pp. 188 ff.
35. Cf. Samoilov, *Malaia Bashkiriia*, pp. 61, 84, 86, ff.
36. Mostovenko, *loc. cit.*, p. 109.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
38. Cf. Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSR, *Narodnost' i rodnoi iazyk naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow, 1928), p. 14; also P. Stepanov, *Uralskaia oblast'* (Gosplan, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928), p. 103.

CHAPTER 9

Muslims of Soviet Central Asia: Trends and Prospects

The crucial question in the entire future of Soviet Central Asia is the degree to which the native population of that region is succumbing to the process of Russification, actively fostered by the Soviet regime.[1] If the Central Asian natives are gradually losing their ethnic peculiarities and assimilating, either by being absorbed into the Great Russian population or by dissolving in a new, "Soviet" nationality, then Soviet Central Asia may be expected in time fully to merge with the Russian core of the USSR. If, on the other hand, they are resisting alien pressures and retaining their ethnic and cultural complexion, then Central Asia will continue to be set apart from the remainder of Soviet territories, and to merit distinct political treatment. In either event, the fate of Central Asia as a Russian frontier and a potential buffer zone between Russia and China may be said to hinge primarily on the cultural tendencies of its Muslim population.

In view of the great shortage of reliable, objective printed materials dealing with the inhabitants of contemporary Soviet Central Asia, an inquiry of this nature must of necessity have recourse to some unorthodox sources of information, among them the testimony of refugees from this area. It must also be confined to the broadest aspects of the question. Neither limitation is quite satisfactory from the point of view of scholarship, but since scholarship is a means for the discovery of truth and not an end in itself, it must be capable of adapting itself to the circumstances.

The primary sources of information for this essay consisted of the standard literature on Central Asia, pre-Revolutionary and Soviet, and of materials collected in the course of interviews conducted with 31 Muslim refugees from the Soviet Union, most of them from Central Asia.[2] These interviews concentrated on the personal experiences of the

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informants, and avoided, insofar as possible, references to politics, in order to reduce to a minimum the likelihood of deliberate concealment or lying. All the informants were male, and consisted, in their majority, of persons 30 to 50 years of age, with a high school or *tekhnikum* education, who had left the Soviet Union as laborers or prisoners of war in the course of the Nazi-Soviet conflict. They represented, in other words, largely the middle-aged Soviet "intelligentsia" (in the Communist sense of the word). The conclusions derived from the interviews were placed against the historical background of Central Asia for the purpose of separating the accidental from the essential, on the assumption that generalizations obtained from interviews were both more reliable and more significant in terms of the future when in agreement with pre-Soviet developments in Central Asia. The fact that in the main there is such agreement seems to the author an added reason for confidence in the correctness of the conclusions thus derived.

The main criteria used in investigating the cultural tendencies of Central Asian Muslim were five: religion, customs, language, ethnic identity, and the character and trends of the native intelligentsia. An attempt was made in each case to determine the extent and nature of the changes which had occurred under Soviet rule; to ascertain whether these changes agreed with or ran contrary to the spontaneous developments taking place prior to the 1917 Revolution; and finally, to evaluate their meaning in terms of the probable future.

RELIGION

The term "religion" comprises at least three distinct phenomena: a belief in the existence of one or more supreme beings; a set of rituals which gives this belief external expression; and a way of life based upon the principles explicitly and implicitly enunciated by the belief's founders. In analyzing the religious life of a community, these aspects must be clearly differentiated.

Russian Central Asia consists of two main parts, distinguished from each other by historic tradition, culture, and topography: the northern half, the steppe region (today's Kazakhstan), and the southern half, Turkestan (comprising the remaining four Central Asian republics). The population of the former was traditionally nomadic, Turkish, and in religious matters fairly indifferent. Turkestan, on the other hand, being predominantly urban and agricultural, and inhabited by Iranians and considerably Arabicized and Iranicized Turks, was until the Soviet period one of the great centers of Islamic learning and practice. This difference between the religious background of the two regions must be kept in mind when studying contemporary Central Asian Muslims.

The most striking feature of the religious attitude of the Muslim refugees is their strong and articulate hostility toward all forms of established religion, including Islam. Time and again, the informants expressed the conviction that all religion is a form of superstition incapable of standing the test of "science," of serving society as a means of attaining social progress. The typical opinion ran as follows: "Yes, I believe in a Supreme Being, but it doesn't matter whether He is called Allah, God, Christ, or anything else. Nor does He care whether I pray or not. Religion is a superstition which keeps people backward. Look at the Arabs and Persians, where religion has gotten them: they are poor and ignorant. To achieve progress, we must not allow religion to interfere, though religion should not be persecuted because it does help some people in facing life." The general assumptions behind such reasoning are fairly obvious: the belief in a conflict between faith and reason, religion and science; a pragmatic, utilitarian scale of values; scepticism of certain aspects of religion, leading to a wholesale rejection of all religion.

In the long run, this attitude may well determine the whole future of Islam in Central Asia. The intelligentsia displays the same cult of reason, and of its concomitant, secular society, in an extreme, uncomprising way, as do the educated groups of other Asian societies. here, as there, progress, the ultimate good, is conceived as incompatible with religion. Against such hostility to established religion the revival of Islam in its pre-1917 form, even under conditions of complete freedom, does not seem likely.

This conclusion is strengthened by the picture given of the religious practices of Central Asian Muslims. Islam in the Soviet Union has to operate under extremely difficult conditions, due in part to the specific repressive measures undertaken by the regime against religion, and in part to the general conditions of Soviet life. In the first category are the physical destruction of the Islamic leadership carried out between 1927 and 1932 through the arrest and deportation of virtually all persons enjoying some religious status in the Muslim community, from the top hierarchy to the lowest village mullah; the closing of nearly all the village mosques and most of the city mosques; the threat of dismissal hanging constantly over every Soviet citizen in any position of responsibility if known to engage in religious practices; and the nearly complete suppression of all religious literature through the change of the native alphabets (from Arabic to Latin in the late 1920's, and again from Latin to Cyrillic ten years later), the impounding of religious texts, including the Qur'an, and the total cessation of all publication of a religious nature. These antireligious policies would of themselves make an active religious life most difficult.

The interviews, however, indicate that equally important in hampering the religious life of Central Asian Islam are forces not directly connected with the Communist antireligious policies, such as the general impoverishment of the population, which compels the inhabitants to devote all their time and energies to attain bare survival, and leaves little freedom for time-consuming actions required by religion; the shortage of animals used in certain Muslim festivals; and the requirements of a highly dynamic society, geared primarily for production and not for the satisfaction of the needs of its citizens. If, despite such formidable difficulties, Islamic practices have not altogether vanished from Central Asia, the reason must be sought both in the great hold which this religion exercises on its followers (Bartold had once observed that history knows many cases of mass conversion *to* Islam, but not a single instance of a society being converted *from* Islam), and the secondary role of leaders and institutions in that religion; the latter factor permits Muslims, like the Jews, to survive better under extreme oppression than other religions for which the clergy, the hierarchy, the supreme spiritual authority are essential.

One of the most important—perhaps the single most important—element in the Muslim ritual are the five daily prayers. This practice seems to have declined among Soviet Muslims to such an extent as to have all but vanished. The principal cause for its disappearance is the inability of Soviet Muslims to take time off from work in order to recite the prayers; such stoppage of work is considered "economic sabotage" and involves serious retribution. The fact that since the 1930's Friday—the day of rest and public prayer—is considered a regular working day in Central Asia prevents the adult population from engaging in communal worship as well. The only times of the day when a Muslim may perform his prayers undisturbed occur at sunrise and at sunset—the first and the last of the daily prayers; that is, when he is at home, with his family. This is the reason why, to the extent that the daily prayer is observed at all, it survives largely among that part of the population which is not gainfully employed: above all, the women and the elders.

The younger generation is further handicapped by its ignorance of the prayers. Only a few of the refugees interviewed knew how to perform the regular daily prayers; none of those belonged to the younger generation. It may also be added that not one of these refugees had cared to learn the prayers since his arrival in the West.

Another important duty of Muslims is to observe daytime fasting during the entire 28 days of the month of Ramazan. Prior to 1917 the fast was faithfully observed by the Turkestan natives; those of the steppe region were less strict, prevented as they were by the exigencies of nomadic and seminomadic life. During Ramazan, Muslim communities

in Central Asia customarily reversed their routine, resting daytimes, eating and entertaining at night. Shortly after the end of the fast there occurs a major holiday, *kurban bayram* (feast of sacrifice), attended by the slaughter of sheep and by festivities.

The difficulties of observing the Ramazan fast in the Soviet Union are obvious at first sight. To eliminate or even reduce daytime work for a period of a month is possible only for a people economically independent; it is inconceivable in a society in which virtually every breadwinner is an employee of the state, and the state drives relentlessly to increase production. Furthermore, a worker who fasts all day is, even when compelled to do a full day's work, a poor worker. As a result, the Ramazan fast is severely repressed by the authorities and can survive only in a greatly modified form.

Several of the refugees recalled instances of Communist Party officials subjecting Muslims suspected of lasting to "tests." Thus, for example, many Muslim employees of state institutions were called in for conferences with their superiors sometime during the month of Ramazan and there offered a drink or a cigarette; refusal to accept the offer was tantamount to an admission of fasting and could lead to expulsion from work. Similar "tests" were recalled by schoolteachers—during Ramazan teams of officials from neighboring towns often visited schools and checked on both the teachers and the students.

Nevertheless, the observance of the fast, although severely restricted, appears to have partly survived. Some Muslims, unable to fast for 28 consecutive days, compromise by abstaining for three days only: the 1st, 15th, and last days of Ramazan. Others, compelled to eat in order to have strength for work and to avoid the suspicion of authorities, eat and drink as little as possible. It is quite likely—although there is no direct evidence—that the fast may be observed more regularly among those who are not gainfully employed.

The *kurban bayram*, despite its originally religious significance, appears to have suffered the fate of most religious festivities in societies which are secularized or on their way to becoming so: the religious element has largely been forgotten, and the holiday has acquired a predominantly secular, national character. This, in part, may be one of the reasons for its survival. Almost all the informants agreed that the *kurban bayram* was widely observed at least until the outbreak of the war, even by members of the Communist Party. The main difficulty in observing this holiday is the shortage of sheep, which are essential for the ceremony. Not only are almost all the sheep in the hands of the *kolkhozy* (collective farms) and *sovkhozy* (state farms)—four-fifths, according to the Soviet Encyclopedia—which do not release them for religious purposes, but the over-all number of sheep and goats in Turkestan has declined from

3 per native in 1913 to approximately 1.5 per native in 1938. Compromises and subterfuges are resorted to to overcome this difficulty. In some collective farms the sheep are stolen or slaughtered under one pretext or another, often with the tacit acquiescence of the collective's chairman. In the cities, the well-to-do purchase sheep on the free market, while the less affluent either enter into partnerships with other families to purchase and divide one ram, or else, if they are even too poor for that, sacrifice a chicken instead. The *kurban bayram* seems to be observed less publicly than in pre-Revolutionary years, and usually only in the circle of the immediate family, "with the windows shut and the doors locked," as several refugees put it.

The third fundamental Muslim duty is that of regular alms giving, known as *zakat*, traditionally set at 2.5 percent of earnings. In Central Asia the *zakat* had lost even before the Russian conquest in the 19th century the character of a purely philanthropic measure, having been transformed into a *de facto* tax, collected for the benefit of the local secular authorities. The tsarist administration did its best to suppress this practice in territories under its control, replacing it with its own system of taxes. Today, nothing seems to remain of the *zakat* in Soviet Central Asia. The practice had no deep roots to begin with; the population is too impoverished to keep it up; and there is no one to collect it. Almost none of the refugees even knew the meaning of the term *zakat*, and upon being informed, denied ever seeing it practiced.

Finally, there is the obligation of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, the *hajj*. Of all the duties incumbent upon a Muslim this is the one most difficult to fulfill under Soviet conditions, inasmuch as the regime forbids travel of private citizens abroad for any purpose whatsoever. Occasionally, as in 1953, the Soviet government itself dispatches to Mecca official delegations headed by government-appointed muftis and shaykhs, but it is quite obvious that such delegations consist only of carefully screened individuals, liberally interspersed with employees of the security police, and that their primary purpose is not religion but foreign propaganda. For the private individual, the road to Mecca is barred. It appears, however, that pilgrimages to the graves of local saints continue to be popular, and in some sense may serve as a substitute for the forbidden *hajj*.

Thus, of the four practices which constitute the central elements of the Islamic ritual, the five Pillars of the Faith (the fifth being the profession of faith), one (prayer) is almost entirely neglected by the younger and middle-age groups, one (fasting) is observed rarely and even then imperfectly, and two (*zakat* and *hajj*) have completely disappeared. Religious *ritual* thus may be said to have declined considerably

and no longer to play an important role in the life of the Central Asian Muslims of the Soviet Union.

Let us now turn to other Islamic customs and practices. Circumcision appears from the interviews to be almost universally observed by Central Asian Muslims. One of the reasons for its prevalence is its tolerance by the regime, caused by the fact that this practice requires neither abstention from work nor the transfer of personal allegiance from the state to the religion, and in fact may be justified by hygienic reasons. It is performed by mendicant "specialists," who visit villages and towns, or by anyone else skilled in the use of appropriate instruments, such as local barbers. Communist Party members and other persons in positions of responsibility who may be incriminated in the eyes of the regime by observing this practice, send their children to relatives away from home, where they can be circumcised without the knowledge of the local authorities. Circumcision seems to have lost its festive character, and is carried out so as to attract the minimum attention. Its prevalence among all layers of Muslim society, including Communist Party members, has been attested to by every one of the refugees interviewed.

The religious ceremonies attending births, weddings, and burials require the presence of religiously trained figures such as the mullahs, and it is the great shortage of such persons which more than any factor deprives them of their religious character. The vast majority of mullahs and other Muslim leaders disappeared during the terror of 1928–32. Careful questioning of refugees revealed that in some villages and towns mullahs did remain all throughout the 1930's. These "hidden mullahs" earned their livelihood as ordinary workers (e.g., kolkhoz laborers, night watchmen, etc.) and often as janitors in mosques and other religious buildings, but when the occasion arose could also conduct religious ceremonies if the latter were organized by trusted friends and within a closed family circle. Almost every one of the refugees interviewed remembered either knowing of such a clandestine mullah or of having heard of one. But they are few and live under the perpetual threat of exposure and arrest; hence, they cannot make a great impression on the religious life of their communities. Where there is need for persons with religious training, the natives are far more likely to use the services of an elderly layman from their own midst than risk engaging a person who is difficult to locate and may involve them in trouble with the authorities.

As a consequence of the disappearance of the religious leaders, births, weddings, and burials appear to have largely lost their religious complexion and become transformed into occasions for mere family gatherings. The entire institution of betrothal—which will be described at greater length below—conforms closely to secular local traditions, but is no

longer accompanied by religious ceremonies. Occasionally, refugees indicate, after a formal lay wedding ceremony, the parents of the bride and bridegroom may engage the services of a mullah or another trained person to read in secret the *nikah*, the wedding formula, but this is an exception rather than the rule.

As for the *shari'ah*—representing for the Muslims the religious "way of life"—it has been eliminated not only by the Soviet liquidation of native religious courts and the introduction of a single system of justice throughout the Soviet Union, but also by the spontaneous development of Muslim society itself. Even prior to the 1917 Revolution there had emerged among the Central Asian intelligentsia a powerful secular reform movement known as *jadidism* (*dzhadidism*, in Russian transliteration), the followers of which adopted as one of their principal aims the separation of religion and state. The jadidists fought the clerical groups, gathered around the Ulema Dzhemieti (Association of Ulema), with as much fervor as they fought Russian colonial officials and settlers. Indeed, on this basis of a united effort against the religious influence on everyday life, there occurred in the early period of the Soviet regime an alliance between the Communists and left-wing jadidists which lasted until the purges of the 1930's. The desire to transform Central Asia into a modern, secular, Western country—a desire which is as deep-seated in the post-World War II refugee as it was in the pre-1917 jadidist—has as one of its prerequisites the elimination of religion from a position of influence in the everyday life of the Muslim community, and its confinement to the "proper" sphere, that is, ritual. Islam as a way of life has thus been destroyed by the combined pressures of Soviet antireligious policy and the hostility of the native intelligentsia. The trend in the direction of secularization is so distinct as to make a return to the *shari'ah* as unlikely as a return of Western Europe to the medieval theocratic ideal.[3]

Without doubt the religious life of the Islamic community in Central Asia is stronger among the lower strata of society, among the mountain peoples, and among the elders and women than it is among the groups represented in the interviews. But it is equally certain that the most active elements of society—the adult males, and especially the rural and urban "intelligentsia"—reject religion. A certain measure of religious revival in the event of the return of civic freedom in Central Asia is not unlikely. It may lead to a reopening of the mosques, the reinstitution of Friday prayers, the emergence of mullahs and the introduction of some religious education for the young. But a return to the religious life of the pre-1927–32 period seems entirely out of the question. Islam still survives as a powerful social bond because it serves to differentiate the native from the Russian; but instead of constituting the substance

of ethnic identification, as it did before the Revolution, today it forms merely one of its many attributes.

CUSTOMS

Although most national customs of the Central Asian Turks are in one way or another connected with Islam, they are by origin and function sufficiently distinct from it to be treated independently, the more so that they are affected differently by Soviet policies: whereas Communism is openly hostile to religion, it either tolerates customs or attempts to take them over for its own purposes.

National customs have fared much better under Soviet rule than religious practices, in part as a result of this tolerant attitude of the regime and in part because they can be better reconciled with the spirit of Westernization. While Islam has suffered a serious decline, national customs have either remained intact or undergone a transformation which has modified somewhat their outward manifestations without diminishing their hold on the population. In regard to customs, the following seems to be the general rule: the natives abandon or modify those customs which are utterly incompatible with the improvement of living standards, but they cling tenaciously to the traditions which either do not interfere with material progress or can be modified to serve it. Where abandonment or adjustment is necessary, the natives often prefer to adopt the customs of their more advanced Muslim neighbors than those of the Russians or other Europeans.

This pattern emerges clearly in the institution of marriage, which can be analyzed in its three main aspects: the method whereby the marriage is arranged; the formalities connected with the engagement; and the wedding ceremony.

Traditionally, in Muslim communities of Central Asia marriages were arranged not by the couples concerned, but by their parents. Engagements were frequently made when the prospective bride and bridegroom were still in their childhood, and occasionally even before they were born. This custom was in keeping with the elevated position of the father in the Muslim family, and with the seclusion of women in the urban and rural communities of Turkestan; among the nomadic Turks, the high bride price (*kalym*) was a further factor inhibiting marriage outside parental authority.

Inasmuch as this practice runs contrary to the breaking up of family control and the emancipation of women implicit in Westernization, it is being abandoned. Everywhere, and particularly in the urban centers, the youth is becoming less and less dependent on the family, and, with the active encouragement of the regime, frees itself from its control.

Coeducational schools, participation in sports, the growing practice of social dating, employment of men and women in offices and stores—all these factors tend to break down the wall between the sexes. The Muslim youth today is not only increasingly able to plan its future without regard to the wishes of parents, but also has many opportunities to mingle freely with members of the opposite sex. All this helps undermine the traditional habits in marriage selection. Among the urban Muslim intelligentsia it appears now to be the rule for the young couples to decide upon marriage first and to ask parents for permission afterwards, as is done in Western societies. In the villages, where the hold of tradition is stronger and the family more closely knit, the parents still do play an important, and perhaps even decisive, role in the arrangement of marriages; but here, too, the tendency seems to run against tradition.

An influential factor in the marriage arrangement among Central Asian Muslims was the *kalym*, or bride price. The *kalym* was paid to the parents of the bride by the parents of the bridegroom prior to the wedding. In the steppe regions, it consisted usually of livestock, averaging in pre-Revolutionary days from 50 to 100 horses and an equal or larger number of sheep—a sizeable fortune by local standards. In Turkestan, the *kalym* consisted of gifts of money, jewels, or other valuables. The payment of the *kalym* is one of the few traditions of a nonreligious nature outlawed by the Soviet regime, ostensibly as "degrading" to women, but its illegality explains only in part its actual decline, which is probably due more to the impoverishment of the native population over the past 25 years. What Kazakh disposes of 50 horses or sheep? Poverty seems to have reduced the tradition of the *kalym* to a purely symbolic significance. It apparently continues to survive in one form or another throughout Central Asia, but it no longer performs any important economic function.

One of the more startling results of information gathered from refugees is the impression of strict sexual morality prevailing among Soviet Muslims. Despite the freer mingling of sexes, there is little opportunity for sexual promiscuity because of the close watch exercised over the girls by their families and the great value attached by the natives to virginity. Most of the refugees agreed that an unmarried Muslim girl who has lost her virginity—no matter under what circumstances—is considered to be on the same level as a common prostitute. Her chances of marriage are almost nonexistent, because it is generally accepted that a marriage contract is void if the bride is found on the wedding night not to be a virgin. On the whole, sexual licentiousness seems rare: it is prevented by tradition and by the control exercised by the family, to whom a deflowered daughter not only brings public disgrace but also represents a lasting financial liability.[4]

So far as the Communist authorities are concerned, the actual wedding act should consist merely of a registration in the local office of the ZAGS (*Zapis' aktov grazhdanskogo sostoianiia*—Registry of Civil Acts); any festivities connected with it should preferably be organized by the local Young Communist League, Trade Union, or other organization to which the young couple belongs. In fact, however, the natives prefer to celebrate weddings in a more traditional manner. Among the inhabitants of the steppe and desert, for instance, it is still customary on the wedding day for the bride (properly veiled) to wait at her parents' home for the friends of the bridegroom to take her to her new home—but whereas before the Revolution she was transported on a camel or a horse, she is now brought to the wedding place in a rented automobile. It is still customary, while the wedding party is in progress, for the young pair to retire to a separate room, and there have sexual relations, in order to be able to prove to the relatives of both parties the virginity of the bride. The entire wedding ceremony in Central Asia assumes ever more the character of a purely secular festivity, but insofar as possible it is carried out within the framework of traditional nonreligious forms and rituals.

The food habits of the natives seem to have undergone little change. Through contact with Russians they have been exposed to such novel foods as potatoes, bread, and boiled eggs, but their preference is for traditional native dishes: pilau, kumys, etc. They are often compelled to eat Russian food, including pork, in government and other restaurants and in the army, but they avoid it if at all possible. The natives seem to prefer to partake of their main meal in the evening, rather than at midday, as the Russians are in the habit of doing.

In clothing the natives of Central Asia appear to tend in the direction of a synthesis of traditional and Western garb. The basic articles of wear, their cut, and ornamentation are native; but some items of clothing are adopted from the Russians. Adult males have almost everywhere taken to wearing leather shoes, which are superior in comfort and durability to their native counterparts; Muslim girls like to wear, together with their national costumes, Western-style blouses. Soviet sources report a general tendency on the part of natives to wear mixed clothing, part Western, part native—the former apparently for comfort, the latter for national identification. In the cities, especially among the youth, Western clothing predominates; in the village, the opposite is the case. In clothes, as in other customs, the principle enunciated earlier holds true: the natives discard what is patently inconvenient and adopt from the Russians what is more practical, i.e., Western. They do not discard traditions for reasons other than utility.

The same principle applies to housing and furniture. The natives adopt freely and widely articles of utility, such as kerosene lamps, samovars, and iron stoves. But they resist efforts of the authorities to introduce chairs, tables, and bedsteads, which to them seem quite unnecessary. "Not only those collective farm families sleep on the floor which as yet have no bedsteads," writes a recent Soviet observer of conditions in the Kirghiz republic. "Sometimes a purchased bedstead, instead of being used for its purpose, stands all made up as a decoration, while the family continues sleeping on the floor."[5] Even the most Westernized Muslim intelligentsia in the cities demonstrate a desire to preserve a link with tradition by decorating a single room of an otherwise Western-style apartment in the native manner.

House construction among the old settled groups of the population seems to follow traditional lines, with minor innovations, such as the use of whitewash for the walls and floors. Among the recently settled nomads, whom the Soviet regime wishes to have acquire permanent buildings, a curious compromise has been attained: the natives spend one part of their time in the permanent structures and another part in the traditional yurt (nomadic tent) erected alongside the houses. On the whole, one gains the impression that among the Turkic groups which had been settled during and since the period of collectivization, the yurt continues to prevail, while in the mountains it is still the exclusive shelter of native inhabitants.

The general picture which emerges from a survey of native customs indicates that they are adhered to far more loyally than are religious traditions. The causes for this are threefold. In the first place, a considerable part of the native population of Central Asia was only superficially affected by Islam, while remaining loyal to local traditions. In the second place, national traditions are on the whole not contrary to the spirit of Westernization, and can in most cases be well adapted to the demands of a secular, utilitarian society. And, finally, the Soviet regime treats local customs far more gingerly than religion, trying to destroy them more through example and infiltration than through outright suppression. The native population clings to its customs, surrendering them only when they are utterly incompatible with material progress of society, and when it does modify traditions, it tries to synthesize the innovations with tradition. The native may be persuaded that it is a good thing to possess an iron bedstead, but often he cannot be convinced that sleeping on a bed is preferable to sleeping on the floor. Similarly, he may agree that eating by fork and spoon is hygenically preferable to eating by hand, but he refuses to agree that pork and potatoes are superior to lamb and rice. This attitude gives native customs a considerable resiliency to external pressures.

LANGUAGE

With the exception of the Tajiks, virtually all the Muslims of Central Asia speak local dialects of one and the same Turki language group. Varying cultural influences to which the individual subgroups have been subjected in the course of history have led to a certain differentiation in the vocabulary and grammar of the principal dialects. Uzbek especially, having been exposed to strong Iranian and Arabic influences, has changed much, even to the extent of losing the vowel harmony common to the sound system of the Turki languages. By and large, however, it is possible to speak of the Central Asian Muslims as possessing linguistic unity: the dialectical differences, significant as they are to the philologist, neither prevent effective communication among the Turkic inhabitants nor preclude the eventual emergence of a single Turki literary language for Central Asia. The latter, however, had not yet been formed when the Communists conquered Central Asia in the 1920's and suppressed its further development.

The importance of language for national consciousness is self-evident: language represents the most ready means of national identification, available alike to the literate and illiterate. While not absolutely indispensable for nationality (witness the Jews), it is so intimately connected with it as to make it one of nationality's very best criteria.

Soviet linguistic policy in Central Asia has two principal aspects, both of which follow closely the general lines of Soviet nationality policy. In the first place it strives at all costs to prevent the formation of a single Turki literary language in Central Asia on the assumption that such a language would serve as a powerful weapon for the forging of a united Central Asian national movement. In the second place, it endeavors to promote the acceptance of Russian as the primary language of communication among persons of different groups. The first goal is fostered by exploiting all, even the minutest, dialectical differences among the various Turkic subgroups, and by granting the status of full-fledged national-literary languages to local variants of one and the same Turki language. The second is fostered through the official change of Turki alphabets from Arabic to Latin, and then from Latin to the Russian Cyrillic; through the gradual introduction of Russian words in their original form and spelling into the native vocabularies; through compulsory Russian language instruction in all schools above the elementary level; and, finally, through the requirement of a good knowledge of Russian for all citizens, regardless of nationality, desirous of making any kind of a career. It is apparently the hope of the authorities that, given sufficient time, such policies will make Russian the language of all the

socially dynamic elements of the Muslim population and relegate Turkic to the status of a peasant dialect devoid of political importance.[6]

This policy of linguistic Russification is far more subtle than that practiced by the tsarist regime in some of its borderlands during the darkest days of modern Russian autocracy (1881–1903), and, if successful, could deal a very considerable blow to Muslim prospects in Central Asia. Thirty-five years is admittedly too short a time to judge the effects of a set of measures apparently designed to operate for several generations; but certain evidence permits us to draw some conclusions about its efficacy and prospects of success.

Soviet linguistic policies seem to have had very little effect on the speech habits of the bulk of the Muslim *rural* population. Living in their own fairly closed communities, which offer little continuous contact with Russians, the Muslim peasants continue to use exclusively their local dialects. They seem to be as ignorant of Russian as their ancestors had been. None of the peasants interviewed knew more than a few words of Russian; after ten years in Germany several could speak better German than they could Russian after several decades of residence in the Soviet Union. For most of the rural Muslims in the USSR, the first important contact with Russians and the Russian language comes with entrance into military service. After being drafted they are distributed among Russian soldiers and are expected to learn the language as best they can. For many of them, the military service is the first and most efficient school on Russian.

The situation is somewhat different in the cities and small towns, where Muslims live side by side with Russians, and where a large proportion of Muslim youths attend high schools and institutions of higher learning. It is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the linguistic training in Central Asia, because it varies from area to area and from time to time. If there is a general principle, it seems to consist in a direct correlation between level of education and Russian language instruction. In the elementary schools, the instruction is predominantly in the prevailing local language, either Turki or Russian, and in areas where both groups are numerous, in both. In the secondary schools Russian is either the principal language of instruction (in schools attended largely by Russian students) or else it is taught as an important second (but "foreign") language; passing a Russian language examination seems to be a graduation prerequisite for all high-school students, regardless of nationality. Every graduate of a Soviet high school is thus expected to possess a knowledge of Russian. Whether or not this knowledge actually exists probably depends more on what the student does after graduation than upon the intensity or quality of his training. For the average Muslim girl who marries a Muslim and then raises a family,

her high-school Russian language instruction is wasted, for at home she speaks her native tongue and soon forgets all she has learned; the same is probably true of the Muslim youth who returns to the village after his studies. For the more enterprising wage earner, however, the Russian training is of greater and more lasting importance: it represents the key to all further academic or professional advancement, as well as to membership in the vast party and state apparatus, which comprise and circumscribe a "career" in Soviet society.[7]

At one time the Communists made serious attempts in the direction of founding university-level training in the native languages, but these endeavors were not very successful, in part because of the shortage of qualified native teaching personnel and in part as a result of the general trend in the direction of Russification. Today most of the university-level instruction, except that which by its very content requires the use of local languages (Central Asian archeology, anthropology, philology, folklore, etc.), appears to be conducted in Russian.

A young Muslim, in order to succeed in life, must learn Russian and learn it well. Among the Muslim intelligentsia, therefore, a knowledge of Russian is widespread. But—and this is essential for the present inquiry—by acquiring a knowledge of Russian the local Muslims do not, as is apparently anticipated by the regime, lose command of their own language; instead, they become bilingual. Russian is the language of business, and the means through which it is possible to establish some contact with the culture of the outside world; it is not the language of daily life, in use at home, in the family, and among friends. The refugee informants were unanimous in asserting that neither they nor their friends, even those active in the Party, ever spoke Russian elsewhere than at work. They were equally firm in maintaining that they knew no Muslims who had lost command of their native speech. This assertion is reinforced by the observation that the Muslim refugees in Germany do not communicate with each other in Russian, even on occasions when, because of diverse ethnic origins, communication in Turki presents considerable difficulties.

It is as yet too early to estimate the effects of Soviet linguistic policy aimed at Russification through methods which are both negative (division of Muslim groups) and positive (the imposition of Russian through compulsion, linguistic infiltration, and career inducements). On the eve of World War II the Muslim rural masses seemed to have been quite unaffected by Soviet linguistic measures, and so were the poorer and less educated elements in the cities. These groups continued, as before, to communicate exclusively in their native dialects, being ignorant of Russian. Soviet policies did cause the numerous and growing Muslim intelligentsia to acquire a working knowledge of Russian; but instead

Table 9.1 RUSSIAN AND NATIVE POPULATION OF CENTRAL ASIA

(Including estimates for Khiva and Bukhara; in round figures)

	1897	*1911*	*1926*	*1939*
Muslims	9,300,000	10,400,000	10,700,000	c. 11,700,000
Russians	700,000	2,000,000	2,700,000	c. 4,500,000
Others	300,000	600,000	300,000	c. 400,000
Total	10,300,000	13,000,000	13,700,000	16,600,000

of becoming Russified these groups became bilingual, using Russian for the purposes of work, and Turki or Persian, as the case may be, for all other purposes. Of linguistic assimilation there does not seem the slightest evidence; on the contrary, all signs point to a remarkable ability of the local languages to survive in the face of strong external pressures.

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF CENTRAL ASIAN MUSLIMS

Until the beginning of the 20th century, Central Asia preserved its ethnic homogeneity remarkably well. The tsarist government discouraged the migration of Slavs into the steppe region for fear of native rebellions, while Turkestan, which in the centuries prior to Russian conquest had been one of the world's most isolated areas, virtually closed to non-Muslims, absorbed only a small trickle of Russian officials and merchants. Khiva and Bukhara continued even after the establishment of the Russian protectorate to admit only a small number of Russians. At the turn of the century Muslims formed over 90 percent of the total population of all Central Asia; in Turkestan itself they accounted for 97 percent of all the inhabitants.[8] (See Table [9.1].)

Perhaps the most significant single change which has occurred in Central Asia during the last half century has been the destruction of its ethnic homogeneity, brought about by Russian and Ukrainian immigration.

The first great migratory wave of Russians entered between 1906 and 1911, during the ministry of P. Stolypin, as a result of the deliberate effort of the tsarist regime to reduce the land hunger of the Russian villages by settling some of their excess population in the sparsely inhabited steppe regions of Central Asia. This colonizing enterprise brought to Central Asia about 1 million peasants, most of whom made their home in the eastern parts of the steppe region and in the Semirechensk province of Turkestan. The newcomers were provided by the government with generous land allotments (transferred from the Crown, which claimed as its property all the nomadic grazing lands) and inventory,

Table 9.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RUSSIAN POPULATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

(Including estimates for Khiva and Bukhara; in round figures)

	1897	*1911*	*1926*	*1939*
Steppe	500,000	1,600,000	2,100,000	c. 2,600,000
Turkestan	200,000	400,000	600,000	c. 1,900,000
Percent of Russians in total population of Central Asia	6.8	15.3	19.7	c. 27.1

and settled in compact villages, apart from the Kazakh-Kirghiz natives, most of whom continued their traditional nomadic or seminomadic habits. The colonization program had only a limited success, for after the outbreak of World War I the large-scale Russian influx into the steppe regions ceased; the Russians living in the Kazakh Republic in 1939 still consisted in their majority of the original Stolypin colonists or their direct descendants. The proportion of Russians in the total population of the steppe region would not have grown appreciably, therefore, were it not for the fact that the upheavals which had occurred in that area during World War I and the Russian Revolution (the 1916 Kazakh-Kirghiz revolt, and the famine of 1920–21) led to a considerable decrease in the native population. While the Kazakh-Kirghiz population remained virtually constant between 1911 and 1926, the local Russian population increased during the same period through natural growth by one-fourth. As a result of these demographic changes, Muslims constituted by 1926 only two-thirds of the population of the Kazakh Republic. (See Table [9.2].)

Turkestan succeeded in maintaining its ethnic homogeneity somewhat longer than the steppe region. The Russian influx into Turkestan prior to the Revolution was predominantly urban, consisting of officials, merchants, military personnel, and other groups connected with this area's administration and economic development. Thus, in 1926 the Russians still constituted merely 7.4 percent of the population of Turkestan.

The next important change in the demography of Central Asia occurred around 1930 as a consequence of Russian immigration and the further decrease of the native population. The Russians who migrated into Central Asia during this period were both victims of collectivization seeking to find refuge and to make a living on the Asiatic frontier, and settlers who followed in the wake of the newly constructed Turkestan-Siberian (Turksib) railroad. These migrants—whose number may be tentatively estimated between 1926 and 1939 at 1,300,000—settled not in the steppe but in Turkestan. While the 1939 census did not provide ethnographic breakdowns for the individual republics (with one exception

noted below[9]), it is possible, by comparing the growth of the population within the individual republics with the total growth of the major Central Asian ethnic groups (both reported by Soviet sources), to arrive at a reasonably close estimate of the distribution of the Russian newcomers:

In the Uzbek Republic	720,000
In the Kirghiz Republic	285,000
In the Tajik Republic	155,000
in the Turkmen Republic	135,000

More than one-half of the migrants, in other words, settled in the Uzbek Republic, where in all probability most of them moved into the towns (Tashkent especially) and the expanding industrial centers of the Ferghana valley. In the Tajik and Turkmen Republics most of the Russian newcomers probably also settled in the cities, while in Kirghizia, where there were numerous Russian agricultural settlements of pre-Revolutionary vintage, they moved into the countryside as well (the total urban population of the Kirghiz Republic grew, between 1926 and 1939, only by 150,000, whereas the total Russian population there increased in the same period by an estimated 285,000 immigrants).

Another factor which increased the ratio of Russians to Muslims in Central Asia was the decline in the Muslim population of the steppe due to the terrors of the period of collectivization. According to Soviet census statistics, the Kazakh population of the Soviet Union decreased between 1926 and 1939 from 3,960,000 to 3,099,000—a decline of about a million and a half if one takes into consideration the normal rate of growth.

Thus, by 1939 the Muslims probably formed less than one-half of the inhabitants in the steppe region and about four-fifths of those in Turkestan. The ratio of Muslims to Russians in all of Central Asia dropped from 15 to 1 in 1897 to less than 4 to 1 in 1939. Obviously, such a rapid demographic change was bound to have profound effects on the ability of the natives to preserve their ethnic identity, the more so since the influx of Russians appears to have continued undiminished after 1939, becoming particularly rapid during the period of war-time evacuation (1942–44) and the new program of Russian and Ukrainian settlement in the Kazakh steppes since 1952.

On the face of it, Russian migration threatens the natives with eventual destruction. Central Asia appears to be faced with ethnic Russification, which may bring about the complete assimilation of the natives. However, in order to determine the effect of the Russian influx upon the natives it is necessary to go beyond mere statistics and to analyze the nature and scope of relations between these two groups. What matters is not

so much how many Russians come to live in Central Asia, but whether, through intermarriage, social contact, cultural and other means, they actually exercise a denationalizing influence upon the Muslims. The answer to this question is not as discouraging for Muslim prospects as might appear from ther mere survey of demographic statistics.

The Russians who migrate into Central Asia do not displace the natives, but settle side by side with them. The Russo-Ukrainian influx into Central Asia resembles not so much a demographic inundation, which gradually spreads over and submerges the whole native population, as a stream which penetrates the area following the path of least resistance and covers the regions which are least populated. It thus splits the population into two unequal parts, both of which retain their national character.

As has been pointed out above, the Russians inhabiting the steppe region in 1939 were largely the descendants of the pre-1914 colonists, living in the separate Russo-Ukrainian villages (now collectivized) or in the predominantly Russian-inhabited cities. When the Kazakhs were collectivized in the 1930's, and in many instances forcefully settled as well, they were formed into separate *kolkhozy* (collective farms), apart from the old and established Russo-Ukrainian villages. The establishment of ethnically mixed collectives was impractical, partly because the Russians were already settled in their own communities and partly because the basis of the native economy, sheep and livestock grazing, was different from that of the predominantly agricultural Russian villages.[10] The overwhelming majority of the Russian and Kazakh peasants in Kazakhstan, therefore, continues to live in separate settlements. Interviews with refugees from this region indicate that until the outbreak of World War II, at any rate, there were practically no ethnically mixed *kolkhozy*, although closely situated villages were frequently combined for administrative purposes into a single *sel'sovet* (village soviet), even when consisting of differing ethnic groups. Occasionally stray Russians may be found working on Kazakh collectives: doctors, nurses, bookkeepers, and so forth—as often as not persons who found it expedient for one reason or another to leave their native regions. Kazakh shepherds and laborers are also employed by some Russian collectives. But these are cases affecting individuals which do not change the general picture of ethnic separation in the rural areas.

Intermarriage is by far the most effective means of breaking down ethnic barriers. Prior to the Revolution, Russians and Muslims did not intermarry. If the interviews are correct, this continues to be the case today. A number of factors prevent intermarriage: the enormous cultural gap between Russians and Muslims, which ranges from such everyday matters as language, food, and type of residence to more subtle differences

of national character and sexual customs; the considerable control which Muslim parents continue to exercise over their female children; and the great difficulty which a mixed family would have in finding a place in the Muslim or Russian communities. The informants unanimously agreed that in Central Asia marriage between a Muslim girl and a Russian would be utterly unthinkable, since it would be prevented by the parents and the male relatives of the girl. Several of the refugee informants stated the opinion that a girl who would evade parental disapproval and marry a Russian would be assassinated by her male relatives; one recalled a specific instance of an Uzbek opera star who was killed by her brother for having married a Russian. Intermarriage is considered an insult to the family and to the nation. As one informant put it: "There are never enough girls for all the available Muslim suitors anyway; if a Muslim girl married a Russian that would mean that we weren't good enough for her."[11] None of the informants—who, it must be remembered, came from the ranks of the most Westernized Central Asian Muslims—knew personally any native girl who had married a Russian.

It appears much easier for a Muslim male to marry a Russian woman, and in some cases this happens because of the shortage of Muslim girls and the not inconsiderable number of Russian widows and prostitutes living in Central Asia. But such occurrences, too, seem rather rare. The informants who knew of such cases could recall only instances of Muslims living with Russian women without benefit of formal marriage; such Muslims are largely people whose homes have been broken up and who live with their wives or mistresses outside both Muslim and Russian communities.

The fact that the mere act of marrying an outsider leads to instant exclusion from the two dominant communities and forces the family to live in a social no-man's land is a strong deterrent to intermarriage. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of Russians and Muslims in Central Asia marry persons of their own ethnic group. Intermarriage appears very rare; insofar as it exists at all, it seems confined to the marginal groups of society, to persons who lack families and hence have little contact with their respective ethnic groups, or those who have left Central Asia and taken up residence in other parts of the Soviet Union.

Social contact, too, seems to be limited, even among the groups which by virtue of their occupation are constantly in touch with representatives of other nationalities. Muslim refugees who had been employed in Soviet agencies and offices together with Russians were unanimous in asserting that contact with the Russians ceased after working hours. Much the same seems to be the case among soldiers on active service in peace time.

Russo-Muslim relations vary considerably, depending upon the social status and level of education of the groups concerned. On the whole, the interviews indicate that national friction is in an inverse ratio to social status and education: the higher the status, the less friction. Racial hostility appears strongest among the poorest rural inhabitants, among the plain soldiers, and the unskilled laborers; it seems least prevalent among the intelligentsia, the state and party officials, the well-to-do peasants and workers, and the army officers. By and large the refugees—despite their strong anti-Russian bias—agreed that the relations between Russians and Muslims are good, and they attached little significance to various incidents of national friction which, being prompted, they had been able to recall. There seems to be a deep-seated feeling that whatever the differences dividing them, both these groups suffer from the same regime, that they are "in the same boat."

In the universities, *vuzy, tekhnikums,* and other places where work is combined with residence, Muslims and Russians frequently tend to separate from each other on their own initiative. A number of refugees reported that Muslim and Russian students, when given the choice, preferred to live in separate dormitories.

The greatest single Russifying force in the Soviet Union is the army. In the 1920's, in the initial stage of the Soviet nationality policy, the Communists had created separate military divisions for the major nationality groups in the USSR. These units were gradually broken up in the early 1930's, first by withdrawing regiments and battalions from their national commands and dispersing them among other regular Soviet divisions, and then by disbanding their commanding staffs as well. From then until World War II there were no separate national units. At one time in the course of World War II, when Soviet military fortunes were at their nadir, attempts were made to create separate all-Muslim units in Turkestan, possibly to serve as Home Guards. However, as soon as the Soviet army began to gain the initiative at the front, the formation of these units was suspended, and its personnel was eventually dispersed in the regular Red army. Since the 1930's the army has scattered Muslim draftees throughout regular Soviet units in such a manner that no more than a few Muslims are assigned to any one infantry company; Muslim officers, too, are distributed as thinly as possible.

Naturally, such a system does not permit Muslim recruits to maintain their ethnic separateness. For many a Muslim, entry into military service represents the first contact with an alien nationality. The Muslim recruit is expected at once to understand Russian commands, even though he is often completely ignorant of Russian. This linguistic difficulty, coupled with the general ineptitude of most Central Asian Muslims for army life (due to the exemption granted them in tsarist days), makes military

service for many a shocking and bewildering experience. Sooner or later, however, most Muslims, except the dullest or most recalcitrant, learn enough Russian to get along and communicate with their Russian superiors and comrades. Several of the refugees stated that they had first learned Russian in the army; for some others, the army was actually the first experience with life outside their own Muslim communities. On many recruits the effect of such an experience, though violent, is not long-lasting; having completed his military service, the recruit returns to his village and soon forgets most of what he has learned. For others, however, it constitutes a radical break which affects their entire life. The Red army represents the only Soviet institution—save for the forced labor camps—where Muslim and Russian societies are forcibly compressed together, and where the cultural and ethnic walls usually separating them are to some extent broken down.

Evidence obtained from refugees who had lived in Soviet concentration camps and Nazi prisoner-of-war camps indicates that in conditions of great distress the ethnic barriers break down most rapidly, for in neither was there much separation between Muslims and Russians.[12] After an initial period of very harsh treatment by the Germans as "Asiatics," the Central Asians were separated out by the Germans under the influence of Turkestani émigré organizations and were formed into numerous small military units, commanded by Germans; these units served as military police and anti-partisan units and in some cases as front-line combat units.

An important factor in the demography of Central Asia is the settlement of the nomadic and seminomadic populations of the steppe and desert regions. The abandonment of nomadic habits had begun long before the Revolution; one of the main themes in the entire history of the Turkic tribes since their appearance in Central Asia and the Middle East a thousand years ago is the gradual transition from pure nomadism to a settled existence. This process was in part caused by the encroachment of agricultural peoples of neighboring territories upon the extensive nomadic lands, with the resultant shrinkage of grazing areas, and in part by the economic advantages to be derived from a combination of cattle and sheep herding with agriculture. Both these factors caused a rapid decline in nomadism in Central Asia in the latter half of the 19th century, under Russian rule. In 1926 (i.e., on the eve of collectivization) in Kazakhstan—the main area of nomadism—26 percent of all the Kazakh families were fully settled, 66 percent practiced nomadism in the summers (transhumance), and only the remaining 6 percent to 8 percent were nomadic the year around. Of the major group, i.e., those practicing summer nomadism, more than two-thirds moved within a 25-kilometer radius of their winter quarters.[13] Soviet collectivization thus

completed a process of settlement that was already well on its way, and given another few decades might have been accomplished quite naturally. A by-product of settlement is the decline of the tribe as a unit of social organization, and with it the disappearance of the tribal divisions and feuds which in the past have constituted one of the most serious deterrents to the development of a national consciousness among the Central Asian natives. The natives of the steppe and desert chafe greatly under the severe limitations imposed upon their movement by the Soviet regime, and, given freedom, would probably like to return at least in part to some form of nomadism; nevertheless, the tribal structure is probably destroyed beyond repair. This fact greatly strengthens the development of modern nationalism.

Thus, despite the considerable Russian influx into Central Asia, the Muslims living there appear to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness. This is thanks both to the character of Russian settlement, which leads to the establishment of Russian centers *side by side* rather than *among* the natives, and to the wide cultural gap, which hinders intermarriage and more intimate social contact. Indeed, it may be said that Russian migration and Soviet policies have rather contributed to the development of national consciousness, first by exposing all natives to contact with representatives of an alien culture and thus forcing them to question their own status, and secondly by helping to destroy—through settlement—the tribal divisions which had always been a most formidable obstacle to native unity vis-à-vis the foreigner.

The Intelligentsia

An important factor in the transformation of an ethnic group into a full-fledged nation with a developed sense of national consciousness is an articulate class with sufficient education and experience to provide the population with intellectual leadership. In societies which have only recently begun to undergo such a transformation, this function is usually assumed by what the Russians call "intelligentsia"—a class composed of individuals of diverse social background whom a common middle or higher education, qualifying it for professional or white-collar work, turns into a new social estate.

The Russian Muslims already possessed such a class prior to 1917, consisting largely of professional people, especially lawyers, teachers, journalists, and engineers from the Kazan and Baku areas. This intelligentsia played a leading role in the Muslim national movements during the Revolution and the period immediately following it; many of its members cooperated with the Soviet regime in the 1920's, during the era of Communist "softness" toward Muslim nationalism; others, espe-

cially those who had been connected with the White Guard movement during the Civil War, went into hiding or disassociated themselves from all further political activity.

Most of the older Muslim intelligentsia of the Soviet Union—pro-Communist and anti-Communist alike—was physically destroyed in the course of the purges, arrests, deportations, and executions of the 1930's. On the eve of World War II Soviet Muslims found themselves without national leadership, since the only other classes capable of providing it—the landowners, merchants, and the clergy—had also been liquidated in the course of the simultaneous drives for collectivization and against the Islamic religion in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

It is a perennial dilemma of the Soviet system that its dynamic totalitarianism requires an unusually large body of trained officials, and yet it cannot permit these officials the freedom of thought and action which they demand in consequence of their training. The principal solution which Communism has so far been able to devise for this problem consists of periodic purges, causing the destruction of the established bureaucracy and its replacement with ever new personnel—a procedure very costly in terms of manpower, but roughly serving the purpose for which it is devised. However, the system of purges, mass as well as local, requires constant repetition, for purge as it may, the Soviet regime cannot alter the fact that the intelligentsia, whose growth it is actively promoting, chafes under the yoke of totalitarianism and constitutes one of the major sources of tension within the established order.

It is this feature of its system which compelled the Soviet regime to replace the old intelligentsia of Central Asian Muslims destroyed by it with a new one. The new intelligentsia is largely Soviet-educated, and comprises people most of whom are today under 40 years of age. This new intelligentsia is, by comparison with the old, pre-Revolutionary one, very numerous. According to Soviet statistics for 1939, in the 5 republics of Central Asia there were 66,000 active students in technical and other specialized schools above the high-school level, and 35,000 active students in universities and other institutions of higher learning. Central Asia also had 758,000 persons with a completed high-school education and 57,000 with a completed higher education. Even allowing that a sizable proportion of these persons consists of Russians and other Europeans, the number of Muslims among them must be very considerable. Measured by Western European standards, the training of these "intellectuals," even graduates of universities, is quite poor. What matters, however, is not their level of knowledge, but their position vis-à-vis the rest of the population and the attitudes and aspirations resulting from their training.

Evidence indicates that the graduates of schools consider themselves superior to manual labor, and expect to be rewarded for their schooling with administrative or other office work. The Muslim intellectual seems to feel that education entitles him not so much to greater rewards as to a reduction of the working load. It is a professional intelligentsia which aspires to national leadership and is strongly interested in political action.

The Central Asian Muslim intelligentsia possesses many of the characteristics which distinguish the Soviet intelligentsia as a whole, but in addition it also displays certain traits engendered by special conditions prevailing in Central Asia.

The Muslim intelligentsia occupies in Central Asia a peculiar position: by origin, language, culture, and family ties, it is connected to the Muslim population; by training, work, and much of its world-outlook, it is identified with the Soviet regime. It thus belongs fully to neither of the two groups, constituting something of a third element which functions as a connecting link between the Russian-dominated regime and the native population. Such a class had existed, of course, in Central Asia prior to the Revolution, and it arises in most colonial systems, but it has never before been so numerous and ubiquitous as it is in Soviet Central Asia. What are its ideas, attitudes, and prospects? Upon the answer to this question depends to a large extent whether the potentialities of a Muslim revival in Central Asia can ever be realized.

Evidence secured from interviews indicates that Muslim intellectuals in Central Asia consider themselves full-fledged Europeans. Startling as this may be to a Westerner, it must be remembered that to many an Asian "Europe" means not so much a geographic concept as a way of life, characterized by technology and secularism, which had been brought to Asia by Europeans. None of the Central Asian refugees interviewed considered himself to be an Asian, and several took offence at the very suggestion that this may be the case. Most of the refugees have a vivid contempt for the non-Soviet East. For instance, several of the refugees who had served in the Soviet army in Iran during World War II spoke with utter contempt of the natives of that country as "Asiatics." Even Turkey, where several of the DP's found refuge after the war, appeared to them backward and "Oriental." Many Muslim DP's left Turkey for Germany or the United States after having been received there with open arms, because, as they put it, they found life there strange and difficult.

Despite its superficial Westernization and Sovietization, this new intelligentsia has not severed the ties binding it to the remainder of Muslim society in Central Asia. It is connected with the population culturally: the intellectuals communicate with each other in the local

Turki dialects, not in Russian; they retain the customs, traditions, and other cultural traits previously discussed; they marry Muslims. They also retain a sense of loyalty to their people, a loyalty which is sufficiently strong to be seemingly unaffected by the close ties between the intellectuals and the regime. It is noteworthy that the majority of the refugees, though outspokenly anti-Communist in their sentiments, agreed that there is little friction between Muslim Communists and the rest of the Muslim population. The population does not transfer its dislike of the regime to its individual Muslim representatives, nor does it seem to regard Muslim Communists as apostates. On the contrary, Muslim Party members are regarded rather as friends and protectors, capable of shielding the inhabitants from the full brunt of Soviet policies. Many refugees recalled instances of receiving special consideration from Muslim Communists. The population is inclined to regard Muslims connected with the Communist machine as unwitting instruments of an evil system and to judge them entirely on their individual merits. Conversely, interrogation of Muslim refugees who had at one time belonged to the Communist Party indicates that in their minds they have not changed their national status by virtue of their Party allegiance. The notion of an all-embracing "Soviet" patriotism, fostered by the regime in its borderlands, apparently has had little if any success among the intellectuals.

This combination of Westernism and ethnic loyalty leads to the development of a sense of national consciousness on the part of the intelligentsia. However, because of Soviet cultural measures in the borderlands, this feeling appears to be as yet rather formless, inchoate, and devoid of a well formulated ideology.

For one thing, the Muslim intelligentsia is woefully ignorant of the history of Turkestan. This is hardly surprising, since the first histories of that area were published only after World War II (if one excepts the very scholarly and inaccessible monographs of Bartold and a few other scholars). The Soviet government deliberately minimizes the history of the Central Asian Turks and exaggerates the role of the Russian conqueror in order to undermine local nationalism and facilitate Russification. But the effect of these measures appears to be quite the opposite of what the Communists intend. Objectively speaking, the history of Turkestan is largely the story of the gradual conquest and destruction of a great Iranian civilization by barbarian Turkic nomads, resulting in perpetual internecine wars, isolation from the rest of the world, and cultural petrification of that area. In other words, the history of the Central Asian Turks is by no means a glorious one, either politically or culturally. By suppressing the study of native history, the regime actually helps stimulate the imagination of the native population. Ignorant of the facts,

the natives glorify their past and create a mental picture of greatness which is quite unwarranted by the historical record. Several of the more educated refugees presented a completely distorted conception of Central Asian history; it was so idealized as to be a model for the stimulation of nationalist emotions.

The refugees also know very little about Central Asian history of recent times. The jadidist movement, the All-Russian Muslim movement, the events of the Revolution and civil war, the Kokand and Alash-Orda governments, are meaningless names to most of them. Most of the younger refugees knew of these events from the Soviet trials of the 1930's; none of them knew what these parties really stood for. *Basmachestvo*[14] was somewhat better known, because of its resurgence during the period of collectivization. Almost all of the refugees from Central Asia had had some personal experiences with the Basmachis, and could discuss the activities of these rebels in their region, though also tending to exaggerate their feats.

Conclusions

Speaking broadly, Soviet Central Asia may be said to have undergone in the course of the past fifty years two parallel developments: the native population has been transformed from a loose agglomeration of diverse tribes and ill-defined ethnic groups into several distinct nationalities, and the Russians residing in Central Asia have grown from an insignificant minority to an important segment of the total population. Both these developments are intimately connected; both may be expected to continue in the foreseeable future.

The first of these two processes has been by and large encouraged by the Soviet authorities because of their fear of pan-Islamism and pan-Turanianism. Faced with the choice of a movement aspiring to integrate all the Central Asian natives into a single nationality bound by the ties of a common religion or racial descent, and the formation of several separate nationalities, they selected the latter alternative as less dangerous to their political hold on the area. This course, however, had its price, for it compelled the Communists to encourage the growth of national consciousness among the major native ethnic groups.

But it would be a mistake to seek in Soviet strategy the *cause* of this process of nationality formation. The cause lies far deeper. The growth of nationalism in Central Asia, as in other parts of the world recently affected by European ideas, institutions, and technology, must above all be ascribed to the fact that the encounter of Westernism and tradition rarely results in a clear-cut victory for either force, but rather leads to a synthesis of both. *Nationalism represents such a synthesis of imported*

Western and traditional native values. It owes its success to the fact that it permits the adoption of all the essential features of European civilization without the surrender of the local ethos. It is strongest and most vital in societies which, like the mid-20th-century Muslims of Central Asia, are in the very throes of this process of cultural fusion.

The Russian influx, uninterrupted since the beginning of the present century, does not hinder this development except where it is accompanied by large-scale physical destruction of the natives (as was the case with the Kazakhs). On the contrary, it rather strengthens it. In the Central Asian context, the Russian population with its Russian culture must be regarded primarily as an agent of Westernization, and hence as a force accelerating the transition of the natives to full-fledged nationhood. The Russians not only tend to promote the spread of such ideas as secularism, utility, and anti-traditionalism, but also by their very presence and cultural cohesion, to induce the native to define his own national status. The Russian influx thus has not led to the emergence of a new, third nationality, "Soviet" in its culture, but to the split of the population of Central Asia into two parts: this split has tended to crystallize the national consciousness of both groups.

Without indulging in the dangerous and fruitless game of prediction (which always presupposes some degree of historical pre-determination), it is still possible, on the basis of the evidence adduced above, to arrive at some general political conclusions from the cultural tendencies discernible in Soviet Central Asia.

In the first place, Soviet Central Asia may be expected to grow in importance as an internal problem for the regimes, present and future, ruling Russia and its possessions. The Muslim natives, formed into full-fledged nationalities with settled populations, well-defined cultures, and indigenous intelligentsias, will be far more troublesome to their rulers than the disunited, half-nomadic, Islam-dominated Muslim tribes and ethnic groups of the past have been. In the second place, the entire area of Central Asia, including Chinese Turkestan with which Russian Central Asia has always been closely connected, may well tend to move with time in the direction of independent statehood. It is not inconceivable that this vast territory may some day be encompassed in a new Turkic, Muslim state, oriented toward the Middle East, and serving as a buffer among Russia, China, and India. In the past this has been prevented by Russian conquest and Russia's policy of supporting Chinese authority in Sinkiang out of fear of British and Japanese activity in this sensitive region. With Britain and Japan out of Central Asia, Russo-Chinese cooperation may be less intensive than before, and any possible disagreements among the great powers bordering on this area will only benefit the national aspirations of the local Muslims. Whether or not

this will occur cannot, of course, be foreseen. But so long as the Central Asian Muslims continue to preserve their cultural peculiarities and, under Communist pressures, to evolve the characteristics of modern nationalities, as they have done in Soviet territories, so long will the cultural and ethnic bases for such a development be present.

NOTES

1. By Soviet Central Asia is meant here both the steppe regions and Turkestan, i.e., the territory covered today by the republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Prior to the Revolution they embraced the General Gubernii of the Steppe and of Turkestan, the Gubernii of Uralsk and Turgai, and the dependent principalities of Khiva and Bukhara. By the term "Russians" is meant not only the Great Russians, but also the Ukrainians and Belorussians, because statistical and other information for Central Asia rarely distinguishes among these Slavic subgroups.

2. These interviews were conducted in the summer of 1953 under the auspices and with the generous assistance of the Institute of Intercultural Studies and the Ford Foundation. I wish to express my particular gratitude to Professor Philip E. Mosely of Columbia University, who first suggested this task and was instrumental in enabling me to carry it out. I also would like to thank the Center for International Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its kind help in completing this inquiry.

3. In this connection it is interesting to note that recently a Constitutional Commission of Pakistan declared that a republic based on the principles of the Qur'an, as desired by the Pakistani ulema, could not be a democratic one, because of the fundamental incompatibility between Islam and democracy. See *New York Times*, April 24, 1954.

4. Newspapers and periodicals from Central Asia indicate that, despite Soviet efforts aimed at changing native attitudes toward women, tradition persists. It seems apparently to be quite common practice for natives to withdraw daughters from school when the girls attain the age of adolescence; the local press even reports occasionally instances of high-school graduating classes being completely devoid of girls, all of them having dropped out a few years earlier. See *Central Asian Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1953), pp. 47–53; Vol. 2, No. 1 (1954), pp. 71–72.

5. S.M. Abramzon, *Ocherki kul'tury kirgizskogo naroda* (Frunze, 1946), p. 75. Abramzon's book supplies interesting data on the culture of the Kirghiz in the post–World War II era, much of which supports the conclusions derived from interviews with refugees.

6. An alternate interpretation of Soviet linguistic policies in Central Asia is suggested by a British authority, G.E. Wheeler: "[The Soviet authorities] evidently hope to achieve by russification an effect similar to that produced by the 'Arabization' of the indigenous languages of the peoples who came under Arab Islamic domination. The adoption of the Arabic script and of numerous Arabic words and phrases was a powerful factor in the perpetuation of Islam, and thus of Arab culture, even after the tide of Arab conquest had receded. But it was

the *result* of conversion to Islam, not the cause, and while the Arabs may have insisted on the use of Arabic for official purposes, just as Tsarist Russia and Britain insisted on the use of Russian and English, there is no evidence that they ever instituted a policy of Arabization of existing languages. The Soviet government is attempting to achieve the same end by arbitrary means: it is insisting on the russification of Central Asian languages by the introduction of Cyrillic script and Russian loanwords; and it even envisages the modification of grammar and phonetics." G.E. Wheeler, "Cultural Developments in Soviet Central Asia," *Royal Central Asian Journal,* Vol. 41 (July-October 1954), p. 181.

7. According to the *Central Asia Review,* admission to the State University of Turkmenia and the Turkmen Academy of Sciences is "dependent upon students passing an examination in Russian and Russian literature." On the other hand, "Russian students at the Academy of Sciences are only required to have a knowledge of the Turkmen language if they intend to make a special study of Turkmen language and literature." There is no reason to suppose that the pattern is different in the other republics of Central Asia. *Central Asian Review,* Vol. I, No. 3 (1953), pp. 65–66.

8. These statistics and those which follow are based mainly on three sources: *Aziatskaia Rossiia,* Vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1914); *Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR. Narodnost' i rodnoi iazyk naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow, 1928); and *Strany mira* (Moscow, 1946).

9. The Turkmen SSR is the exception. Official Soviet statistics for 1939, when the total population of this republic was 1,251,900, break down its ethnic structure as follows: Turkmen 59.2 percent; Russians 18.7 percent; Uzbeks 8.5 percent; Kazakhs 4.9 percent; other nationalities 8.7 percent. Z.G. Freikin, *Turkmenskaia SSR* (Moscow, 1954), p. 84.

10. Attempts to mix collectives apparently had little success: "Instead of organizing the greatest possible mutual assistance of Russian and Kazakh collective farms," writes an official Kazakh Republic publication, "[the authorities] permitted instances of formation of international collective farms, ignoring the fact that the mass of the collective farmers was not as yet prepared for them." *10 let Kazakhstana—1920–1930* (Alma-Ata, 1930), p. 216.

11. Indeed, the ratio of males to females in Central Asia was always high: in 1926 the proportion was 10 to 9 in favor of the males. Among the Russians, on the other hand, the ratio was reversed.

12. More recent evidence, however, indicates that this has not been the case in Soviet forced labor camps since World War II. Repatriated inmates of Vorkuta, one of the largest Soviet forced labor camps, indicate that national differences are very prominent in the camp, and the prisoners tend to group strictly along national or religious lines. See, for instance, J. Scholmer, *Vorkuta* (New York, 1955). It is not certain whether this contradition is due to some unknown factors operating in post–World War II camps, or whether there is no clear-cut pattern permitting generalization on this subject.

13. *10 let Kazakhstana,* pp. 82–83.

14. *Basmachestvo* was a native resistance movement directed against the Soviet regime; it was particularly active in the period 1918–1922. See Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA, 1954), pp. 178–80, 255–60.

CHAPTER 10

"Solving" the Nationality Problem

Nationalism is a natural ally and concomitant of democracy. This connection is often lost sight of in the West where nationalism, once it matured, shed its democratic affiliations and became increasingly identified with conservative and reactionary causes. But this had not been the case in Europe originally, and it is still not the case in those areas of the world which have only recently experienced the first stirrings of national sentiment. Here, nationalism and democracy are closely linked.

There are good reasons for this close affinity between the two. Democracy, by the mere fact of asserting the principle of popular sovereignty, raises the question: Who are the "people"? How many and what kind of "people" rule the given state? These questions are most readily answered by reference to nationality. The "people" are the "nation"—that is, those who share a common language and secular culture. Indeed, in most European constitutions of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the terms "people" and "nation" are used interchangeably. Now, in multinational empires where one nation rules many, this identification of democracy with nationalism is inherently an explosive force. Here the "sovereignty of the people" means not only the introduction of democratic institutions, but the overthrow of foreign rule. This is the reason why, under the impact of democracy, imperial structures previously considered viable, like the Austrian and British, came under severe internal stress in the past century.

Until the end of the 19th century, the Russian Empire was generally regarded as a viable political organism—except by the Poles, who had been acquired late and refused to assimilate. One can dismiss accusations that Russian imperialism was more brutal than its Western counterparts, exactly as one can disregard the claims of Stalinist and post-Stalinist Soviet historians that it was somehow more "progressive." The Russian

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Empire was an empire like the others, perhaps less efficiently administered, especially in the remote provinces where lack of supervision by the center permitted serious abuses. Its political inefficiency, however, did have its good side, for it also allowed a great deal of diversity. Until the 1860's, vast areas of Russia were allowed to escape the authority of the central bureaucratic apparatus and to rule themselves (e.g., Livonia, Finland, and the Kazakh steppe).

A complicating feature of the history of Russian imperialism is the fact that the Great Russians developed a sense of national consciousness more or less concurrently with their subject peoples (the Poles again excepted). In other words, at the very time when they acquired an awareness of their own national identity, they were forced to contend with nationalist movements directed against themselves. I believe that this coincidence had much bearing on the whole development of Russian nationalism and, in particular, on Russian imperial practices. The French in North Africa, the Germans in the Cameroons, or the Japanese in Korea had no doubt about their own identity. They crossed bodies of water, put down local resistance by force, and incorporated the conquered areas. But the Russians were never fully conscious of being strangers in their vast and amorphous land. The absence of any sharp land or water frontiers between Russia proper—the upper Volga and Oka region—and the Pacific, the Himalayas, or the Black Sea, permitted Russian colonists to move steadily outwards, engulfing or bypassing other ethnic groups, often without realizing that they were engaged in an imperial venture. The historical fusion of nationalism and imperialism, as well as the geographic contiguity of national state and empire, helps explain why the Russians never developed either an imperial mentality or an imperial constitution. They created and ruled an empire as if they were creating and ruling a national state.

The first stirrings of national sentiment among the subjugated peoples toward the end of the 19th century produced a distinct shock in Russian public opinion, well reflected in the programs of political parties. The parties of the right, of course, rejected out of hand any idea of autonomy for the various ethnic groups, being committed to uphold the supremacy of the Great Russian nationality and its Orthodox religion. But even those of the center and the left—parties which would have no truck with racial or religious discrimination—were strangely embarrassed whenever the "national problem" reared its head. They were all for abolishing disabilities imposed by the Imperial government on minorities, such as the Jews; they were even prepared to concede independence to Poland. But beyond this they hesitated to go. Russian liberals and socialists, in their desperate fight against Tsarism, feared nationalism as a divisive force and preferred to ignore it.

Though by the time World War I broke out most political parties had formulated programmatic solutions of the nationality problem, they did so in an unmistakably halfhearted manner. Deep inside, the liberals believed that the national problem would solve itself with the introduction of political democracy, while the socialists were equally certain it would vanish with the expropriation of private property. That the desires of the minorities not only stemmed from political or economic dissatisfaction but also expressed positive aspirations of a democratic nature was not seriously entertained by any prominent opposition group in Russia, despite ample evidence to that effect from neighboring Austria-Hungary.

LENIN AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Fundamentally, Lenin had a similar attitude toward the national question, notwithstanding the boldness of his nationality program. Like his socialist colleagues, he viewed nationalism as a by-product of the capitalist mode of production, doomed to disappear with the introduction of socialism. More than any socialist leader, however, he took seriously the possibility of exploiting the frustrations of the national minorities for revolutionary purposes. Lenin always looked for allies, no matter how distasteful they or their ideals may have been to him. It was while lilving in Austria on the eve of World War I that he became aware of the explosive force of nationalism and formulated a radical programmatic "solution." This solution was political self-determination, defined to mean that every national minority had the right to separate and form an independent state; if it did not wish to avail itself of this right, it had to acquiesce to assimilation. Lenin rejected any middle way, such as federalism or cultural autonomy, because he felt they institutionalized and therefore perpetuated national distinctions. His thesis on national self-determination was criticized at the time of its formulation (1913) by fellow-Bolsheviks on the ground that it would split Russia into many small states and thereby hamper the development of capitalism and socialism. Lenin, however, had no such fears. He felt certain that capitalism would inexorably fuse the national minorities with the Russians and create out of the Empire an indissoluble whole, so that in practice no minority peoples would or could take advantage of the right to independent statehood. His solution, therefore, was also essentially declarative. It was so bold because he did not expect it to be exercised.

Within a few years, however, events made a mockery of Lenin's calculations.

Once the revolution got under way, the nationalist movement among the non-Russian peoples matured with great rapidity. The phenomenon had no single cause. In some areas, separatism was due to a desire of

local groups to escape the bloodshed of the civil war. In others, it was the result of intervention by Germans, Austrians and Turks. In others yet, it came into being because of pent-up hatred between the native population and Russian settlers. Whatever the reason, however, once launched, separatism gained great impetus. The local governments which came into being in the years 1918–1920 may have been as ephemeral as the money or postage stamps they issued, but the independence which they proclaimed and in some way embodied struck root in popular consciousness. The native intelligentsias in particular developed a strong appetite for authority during those years. The history of the formation of the Soviet Union offers many striking examples of individuals who as late as 1916 had pledged loyalty to Russia, yet fought for separation from it two or three years later.

The unexpected disintegration of the Russian Empire confronted Lenin with a dilemma: either to acquiesce in it and reduce the domain of the Bolshevik regime to the size of Muscovy in the reign of Basil II; or to seize the separatist areas by force of arms and thereby abandon the entire Bolshevik nationality program. As we know, Lenin chose the second alternative. Wherever possible, he ordered the separated borderlands to be reconquered and reincorporated into the Russian state. At the same time, as a sop to their nationalist feelings, he granted the so-called Soviet republics pseudo-federal status and a considerable measure of cultural autonomy—the very devices which he had condemned before the Revolution as nationalistic and reactionary.

The foundations of Soviet nationality policy thus were laid not in Lenin's pre-1917 writings, but in the practical directives issued in the midst of the Civil War. At that time the Communists did not think about the long-term effects of any policy, for they were fighting for survival. They needed Ukrainian wheat, coal, and iron, Caucasian oil, and Turkestani cotton. They had to prevent the borderlands from turning into White outposts. It must also be kept in mind that in 1918–19 the Communists believed in the imminence of world revolution. In subjugating the breakaway borderland republics, they were motivated not so much by a desire to reestablish the frontiers of the old Russian Empire as by a wish to "liberate" as many countries as possible from the "capitalist-imperialist yoke." Their attack on the government of the Ukrainian Directory in early 1919 basically had much the same purpose as the support which they extended that year to Bela Kun's government in Hungary, a country which had never formed part of Russia. The fact that Soviet nationality policy was devised as an emergency measure in the Civil War, that it was not thought out but improvised as a makeshift arrangement to tide the new regime over until the outbreak of world

revolution, is essential to an understanding of both its philosophy and its operation.

By 1920 it became clear that the world revolution would not come, at least in the foreseeable future. It was necessary, therefore, to bring order to the helterskelter arrangement which had come into being in the preceding three years. The constitution of the Soviet Union, promulgated in 1923–24, froze the system of administration evolved in the course of the Civil War. It is testimony to the fundamental conservatism of all Russian politics, whether imperial or Soviet, that this system has remained virtually intact to this day. This fact permits us to review the successes and failures of Soviet nationality policy over the past fifty years as a whole. Let us carry out the survey under the rubrics of political, economic, and cultural policies.

POLITICS

The Soviet Union has been from the beginning a strictly centralized state, ruled both horizontally and vertically by the Communist Party. The party does not recognize national divisions. Its structure is homogeneous, cutting across ethnic lines. This much can hardly be disputed.

Despite its own centralization, the party recognizes constitutionally the existence of national republics, some of which—the so-called union republics—are in theory able to separate and form independent, sovereign states. In reality unitary, the Soviet Union is in form federal. The fiction of federalism is a legacy of the Civil War, when it was found expedient, for both domestic and foreign reasons, to leave the conquered borderlands a semblance of sovereignty. In 1922, when the new constitution was being drafted, Stalin urged that this fiction be abandoned and the national republics incorporated into the Russian Soviet Republic. But Lenin refused because he foresaw the necessity of formally dissociating the new Soviet state from the name "Russia" in order to permit the absorption into it of future communized countries. (Lenin originally even proposed to call the new state "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Europe and Asia"). Lenin also attached importance to the federal fiction as a psychological asset in overcoming the suspicion of the national minorities toward the Russians. For these reasons the pseudo-federal system remained on the books.

Now it is needless to elaborate that the republics do not—and, given the Communist Party's view of itself, cannot—enjoy anything resembling genuine authority, and that their "right to separation" is meaningless. Historically viewed, the functions of the so-called republican governments resemble not those of bona fide federal states but those assigned before the Revolution to the provincial *zemstva*. Nevertheless, the Soviet national

republics with their token governments must not be written off. The *zemstva*, too, lacked legislative authority, yet they became with time important foci of political resistance. The same may well happen with the administrations of the Soviet republics.

In the first place, national governments, even when impotent, are known from historical experience to arouse strong feelings of loyalty among both their officials and subjects. Napoleon had this disagreeable experience with the satellite governments he had set up over Europe. Even some of his own brothers identified themselves so closely with their domains that they resisted him and had to be removed. The puppet Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy and the Confederation of the Rhine became the nuclei, respectively, of the united Italian and German states. We can observe the same phenomenon in 20th-century Africa. The African states which came into existence after World War II follow the frontiers carved out in the 19th century by their imperial masters. They are legacies of conquests accomplished by Western armies and legalized by Western diplomats without regard either to the wishes of the native population or to its ethnic composition. Yet the "imperialist" origin of their states has not inhibited the Ghanaians or the Congolese from developing a genuine sense of patriotism. Undoubtedly this is also true of the Soviet national minorities. The fact that the Uzbek Republic is a Soviet creation, and that its government enjoys no meaningful authority, probably does not make it any less real for the Uzbeks, and especially for the Uzbek intelligentsia.

In the second place, the bureaucratization of Soviet life and the spread of education have markedly increased the number of intellectuals with administrative experience. In 1917–20, the nationalist movement in the borderlands of Russia had been led by a handful of lawyers, teachers, and journalists, few of whom had had any practice in statecraft. By contrast, there are today in every minority republic thousands of persons employed in the party and state apparatus who could, if permitted, assume full responsibility for local administration. The hunger for power among the intelligentsia in so-called underdeveloped countries is well known. They tend to consider a secondary school diploma a ticket to political office, and they chafe when positions to which they feel entitled are occupied by civil officials from another region or of another nationality. There is little doubt that the native intelligentsia in the Soviet borderlands have similar ambitions and experience similar frustrations. To enjoy the appearance of power without its substance is not something which they like or will acquiesce in forever.

These two considerations—the psychological reality of statehood and the discontent of the native intelligentsia, especially those serving in the bureaucracy—endow Soviet federalism with a significance which it lacks

when viewed purely from the point of view of power distribution. Devised to mollify nationalism, it in effect intensifies it and provides it with institutional outlets.

ECONOMICS

The economic benefits of imperialism are familiar. Imperialist rule brings with it capital and technical skills, opens up markets for local produce, and thereby contributes to "economic development." Thanks to these benefits, areas which once were colonial possessions are today at a higher economic level than those which were not. On the debit side, however, imperialism entails regional specialization, which results in unbalanced economies overdependent on one or two basic commodities.

Broadly speaking, Soviet imperialism has brought with it the same advantages and disadvantages as did so-called "capitalist" imperialism.[1] Russian investments have stimulated and continue to stimulate economic activities which would have been beyond the capacity of the borderlands were they independent. The construction of railroad lines alone (many of them, to be sure, laid before the Revolution) has linked the borderlands with markets that would not have been otherwise available to them, thereby substantially enhancing the value of their produce. At the same time, however, the borderlands have not been permitted to develop rounded economies. Soviet planning offices treat the entire Soviet Union as an economic entity, placing industries and assigning crops where they are most profitable or strategically useful, without regard to local desires.

Setting aside the question of how well the borderlands would have fared economically had they not been subjected to Communist economic regulation, it seems fairly certain that by being part of a large economic entity they do enjoy distinct benefits.[2] Statistical computations purporting to show that Russia withdraws more wealth from the national republics than it puts into them are not convincing because they usually do not take into account the costs of administration and defense which these republics would have to bear if they were independent. They are indeed no more realistic than Marxist statistics adduced to show imperialistic exploitation of colonies by the "capitalist" countries. Nevertheless, many intellectuals in the borderlands passionately believe that they *are* being exploited by Russia, and this belief is politically significant.

Confined for half a century within a closed economy and unable to reach foreign markets directly, the national republics have become, for better or worse, welded economically to the other regions of the Soviet Union. It would be dangerous, however, to draw from this economic fact conclusions about their political future. We know, for example, how closely Algeria was formerly integrated into the French economy, and

how much its own economy has declined since independence. Yet this predictable fact did not prevent Algerian nationalists from waging a determined struggle for independence. Nor would they now trade their independence for the economic advantages of reunification. If economic considerations were the determining factor in such matters, nationalism would not exist, because it is inherently an economic absurdity. The integration of the various regions of the USSR into an economic whole, therefore, is not likely of itself to retard the development of national sentiments or movements. The mere fact that many intellectuals in the national republics believe they would be better off without Russian tutelage may have more bearing on their political actions than the objective realities of the situation.

There is another aspect to this matter. Even if separation from the imperial metropolis usually brings with it an economic decline of the ex-colony taken as a whole, it does improve the economic status of some of the native social groups. How many clerks in French Algerian enterprises have become executives since Algeria gained independence! How many sergeants have been promoted to colonels, how many teachers have become school inspectors, how many reporters have secured editorial desks! The general deterioration of the Algerian economy has not adversely affected *their* climb up the social and economic ladder. And after all, it is just these groups—resentful intellectuals and white-collar workers—who everywhere furnish the leading cadres of nationalist movements. It would be difficult to dissuade them from engaging in separatist activities by the force of general economic arguments. No matter what would happen to their particular country as a whole, their personal position would be likely to improve under independent statehood.

The Algerian example provides a further corollary for Russia. After the protracted and vicious war waged between the French and Algerians, one might have expected that relations between them would remain permanently poisoned. Yet as soon as France had granted Algeria independence, the two countries reestablished normal economic ties. The point is that Algeria and France, having become economically interdependent over a long period of common statehood, need each other. France requires Algerian labor (and, more recently, oil); Algeria requires French markets. It is likely that future relations between the national republics and Russia will develop along similar lines. Even if some day the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Central Asia should secure independence, they would probably want to continue close economic relations with Russia proper, to which they are linked by transport and a long tradition of trade. Russia thus seems likely to remain the hub of a large economic community, regardless of political vicissitudes.

CULTURE

In the borderlands which they reconquered during the Civil War, the Communists at first granted the minorities a considerable measure of linguistic and cultural autonomy in addition to pseudo-federal institutions. In particular, they permitted the native intellectuals great latitude in matters of historical and political thought. This policy was abandoned in the early 1930's, when Stalin, for reasons of political expediency, found it necessary to appeal to Great Russian nationalism; however, it left lasting traces. For many of the nationalities, the 1920's were a decade of unprecedented cultural activity, in the course of which they laid the foundations of a national ideology. Indeed, some of the smaller, more primitive ethnic groups became aware only then of their national identity. If for the Russians the Revolution marked the beginning of a tragic cultural decline, for some of the minorities it meant the very opposite: the birth of a national culture.

Much of the "instant culture" that sprang up in non-Russian republics during the 1920's is comical, but it is nevertheless taken very seriously by the population concerned. For example, I recall once being told by an Azerbaijani refugee that the Russians must have no culture of their own, otherwise they would not translate into Russian so many works by non-Russian authors of the Soviet Union. Even so civilized and ancient a nation as the Armenians can get carried away and . . . make claim to having invented cybernetics a thousand years ago.

No single aspect of the nationality question evokes more passion than the matter of assimilation. And rightly so, for this issue is indeed critical. If in fact the minorities are gradually losing their ethnic identity and fusing with the dominant Great Russian population, then the Bolsheviks may be said to have successfully "solved" the nationality problem. To answer this question with any degree of assurance, we would have to have access to a great deal of statistical and ethnographic information—such, for example, as data on intermarriage or domestic habits. We do not, however, possess such information, and all we can go by is the census figures on linguistic habits—data which are at best of limited significance, and at worst of dubious reliability. Without going into the detailed results of the linguistic censuses, suffice it to say that while they indicate rapid linguistic assimilation of smaller and territorially scattered ethnic groups, they also reveal a remarkable persistence of linguistic loyalty among the larger, more compact minorities with their own republics. There has been no significant Russification of the Ukrainians, Georgians, Uzbeks, or other major borderland peoples. The fact that in these republics much of the administration and education is in the hands of native intellectuals makes it possible to resist efforts at

Russification emanating from the center and from the local Russian population.

The prevalence of bilingualism among intellectuals in the borderlands need not, of itself, be taken as a symptom of denationalization. The phenomenon has parallels in other colonial areas. The most rabid Indian nationalists, for example, spoke English as their second language, and even today English continues to serve as the official language in the parliament of independent India. Similarly, in Algeria, the war for independence was led by French-educated Arab nationalists, to whom French was a second language. English was for the Indians, and French for the Algerians, not a substitute for their local, native languages, but a link with the Western world. Russian performs the same function for Azerbaijani or Tadjik intellectuals.

The linguistic data are thus not enough to permit any firm opinion on the question of ethnic assimilation. It can be said, however, that neither the scanty information coming from the USSR nor the lessons taught by the experience of other empires would suggest that such assimilation is taking place. The onus of proof in this matter rests with those who argue the opposite hypothesis. The intense debate carried on in Soviet journals . . . on the subject of the "merging" of nationalities in the Communist state of the future is indicative of the concern this question causes the Soviet authorities and shows they are far from convinced that the issue of assimilation has been solved in a positive sense.

In addition to politics, economics, and culture, there is one more aspect of Soviet nationality policy that should be mentioned, one that cuts across all three: the relationship between ethnic groups. Official Soviet propaganda sidestepped this question for a long time on the ground that there can be no national antagonism in the Soviet Union, either because it has been constitutionally outlawed, or because the Russians are immune to it by virtue of their peculiar "all-human" ethos. It is perfectly clear however, that the Soviet constitution, of itself, can no more eliminate national or racial tensions in the USSR than the US Bill of Rights can assure the civil equality of American Negroes. More is needed than laws. The belief that the Soviet constitution has "solved" the relations between ethnic groups is a widespread Russian self-delusion. Much the same holds true of Russian "pan-humanity." It may have carried the day for Dostoevski in his Pushkin Speech of 1880, but as a serious contention it will not hold water. The Russians are as susceptible to antisemitism, anti-Negroism, and every form of xenophobia as are members of other nations.

It is difficult to speak with any assurance on ethnic relations in the Soviet Union because the material is even scantier than on the question

of assimilation. There is much evidence that friction exists not only between the Russians and the other nationalities, but also among the different national minorities themselves. . . . Many of the minority intellectuals blame the Russians for the poverty and lack of freedom in their regions; others, not without justice, accuse them of discrimination in higher schooling and career advancement. In areas where the Russians have penetrated and settled *en masse* in this century (*e.g.*, the Baltic areas and Kazakhstan) there is deep resentment against the newcomers and acute racial tension. . . . But there does not seem to be widespread hatred of Russians, even among ethnic groups which have suffered most from communism. For although the Russians rule, they are not a "Herenvolk" as were the Germans in their short-lived empire. A Russian *qua* Russian does enjoy certain advantages, but he does not automatically have a privileged status. Indeed, some Russian settlers in the non-Russian republics believe that they are worse off then the native citizens, and they grumble about having to toil for the indolent Caucasians or Turkestanis. There are also local tensions among different national groups. The Armenians and Azeri Turks, for example, seem to have developed a healthy dislike for the neighboring Georgians, whom they accuse of having lorded it in the days of Stalin and Beria. In the Ukraine, the traditional antisemitism has not subsided.

All these antagonisms are undoubtedly exacerbated by that intense Russian nationalism which has since the 1930's penetrated the whole Soviet apparatus, but they cannot be entirely ascribed to it. In recent times we have seen similar ethnic conflicts arising in democratic states (*e.g.*, Canada and Belgium) where the minorities are given very wide latitutde. As pointed out at the beginning of this essay, nationalism is an intrinsic aspect of the democratization of modern life which goes on relentlessly everywhere, even in countries with a political system that is the very antithesis of democracy.

To summarize: The national problem in the Soviet Union surely has not been "solved." On the contrary, if by a "solution" we mean the disappearance of national frustrations and animosities, the problem is in many ways more acute than it was when the Communists seized power fifty years ago. True, the Soviet regime is in theory an international government, the bastion of "world socialism," and it cannot afford to tolerate, let alone excite, national animosities as the Imperial government was wont to do in its final decades. For this reason, although antisemitism, for example, seems to have greatly intensified in the past fifty years, it is not allowed to take violent outlets. On the other hand, all the evidence available both from within the Soviet Union itself and from historic parallels with other countries indicates that the nationalism of the minority peoples of the USSR (like that of the Russians themselves) has grown

and intensified since 1917. There is a great deal of nationalist frustration in the Soviet Union. Unless the Soviet rulers face up to it and begin the process of decentralization voluntarily, it is likely someday to explode in a most destructive manner.

NOTES

1. This statement is meant to apply only to areas within the USSR, and not to the so-called satellite states of Eastern Europe.

2. There is little doubt in the author's mind that Russia and its empire would have been very much better off economically had the Revolution not occurred, but this is irrelevant to the present discussion.

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